THE UNIVERSITY
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Suddenness and Signs:
The Eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians

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PhD in New Testament Language, Literature, and Theology
The University of Edinburgh
2019

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis has been completed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgement, the work presented is entirely my own.

Date 11/11/2019

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ABSTRACT

Eschatology is generally and rightly regarded as the most significant topic of both 1 and 2 Thessalonians. However, the nature of the eschatologies in these two epistles—and particularly their relationship with each other—is endlessly debated in New Testament scholarship. Furthermore, eschatology plays a large role in the debate around the authorship of 2 Thessalonians, which is currently at a stalemate. In this thesis I examine eschatology in both letters from a new perspective: without any presuppositions about the authorship of either letter. Without making a decision on authorship, in chapters one and two I analyse the eschatological passages in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, respectively, working through all of the debated interpretive issues. In chapter three, after discussing theories of comparison and how, precisely, we should decide whether or not two texts are "compatible," I then compare the two eschatologies as outlined in the previous two chapters. As a result of this extensive comparison I conclude that the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians cannot be understood as incompatible; thus, one of the major arguments for the pseudonymity of 2 Thessalonians must be put to rest. The exegesis and the comparison itself highlight significant parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians and the Synoptic eschatological discourse of Mark 13//Matt 24//Luke 21, so in chapter four I explore the tradition history of this material. I argue that the Thessalonian correspondence and the Synoptic eschatological discourse are both based on an early Christian eschatological tradition that combined sayings of Jesus with a re-interpretation of Dan 7-12 and applied this material to the still-future return of Jesus; 1 and 2 Thessalonians together present the two sides of this tradition—sudden arrival and anticipatory signs—which further confirms the letters' compatibility. In chapter five I reconsider issues of critical introduction, completely re-opening the debate by examining every possible solution for the relationship of these two letters and their historical situations. I conclude that 1 and 2 Thessalonians are both written by Paul to the community of Christ-followers in Thessalonica to correct certain eschatological misunderstandings and to shape their behaviour and response to suffering in light of their expectation of coming judgment and their returning Lord.

LAY SUMMARY

Both 1 and 2 Thessalonians are concerned with eschatology (that is, discourse about "the end"), for both deal with topics such as the coming of Jesus, the resurrection of the dead, and final judgment. However, the relationship of these two letters is highly debated. While some view both as genuine letters of Paul, others believe their eschatological accounts are too different to be have been written by the same person. The debate about authorship is currently at a stalemate. In this thesis, my goal is to examine eschatology from a new perspective: without presuming the authorship of either letter. In the first two chapters, I examine each of the passages that deal with such eschatological topics and create syntheses of each letter's eschatology. In the third chapter, I compare the two eschatologies and conclude that they are, in fact, compatible. In the first three chapters, I note significant parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians and Mark 13//Matt 24//Luke 21, so in the fourth chapter I examine these parallels in-depth and determine that the Thessalonian correspondence and the Synoptic Gospels all make use of the same early eschatological tradition, which is why all of these texts emphasise both the suddenness of "the end" as well as certain signs and events that must first happen before "the end." Because both letters share this same tradition, 1 and 2 Thessalonians are further proved to be compatible. In the final chapter, I reconsider all the various proposals for authorship and the historical occasion(s) of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, ultimately concluding that the best explanation for the relationship of these letters is that they were both written by Paul sometime in 50-51 CE to the community of Christ-followers he founded in Thessalonica; Paul writes to clear up some misunderstandings in the community about eschatology and to encourage them in the midst of their suffering by reminding them of Jesus's future coming, when he will rescue them and judge those who are currently afflicting them.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people contributed in various ways to the production of this thesis and deserve my deepest thanks. Pride of place must be given to my doctoral supervisor, Dr Matthew Novenson. This thesis would not be what it is without his generous and patient guidance, his incisive feedback, and his tireless championing of me and my work. It has been one of the greatest privileges of my life to study with him over these past four years. Thanks also to my secondary supervisor, Professor Paul Foster, for his guidance at critical stages of the project.

Various portions of this thesis were presented at the International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Studies and the European Association of Biblical Studies annual meetings, as well as the New College Biblical Studies Research Seminar. I am thankful for the feedback I received in each of these settings. I must also thank the School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh for providing a Divinity PhD scholarship without which this work would not have been possible.

I am exceedingly grateful for the warm friendship and collegiality I experienced as part of the New College postgraduate community. Thank you particularly to Teresa McCaskill, Sarah Agnew, Jay Thomas Hewitt, Bernardo Cho, Daniel Jackson, Benj Petroelje, Brian Bunnell, Patrick McMurray, Sofanit Abebe, Ryan Collman, Matt Sharp, Jim Leavenworth, Eric Beck, Jamie Wright, Andrew Michael Jones, Elizabeth Corsar, and Julia Lindenlaub for stimulating conversation, book recommendations, and solidarity.

I am richly blessed in friendship and could easily fill another tome with appreciation for all those who have spurred me on. Tom and Louise Emslie-Smith, Craig and Louisa Henry, Pete and Eleanor Dickson, Amanda O'Kelley, Stephanie Medlin, Andy and Cara Ritson, Kenny and Anna Robertson, David and Angela Gibson, Ollie and Fiona Morrison, Gillian Campbell, Emma Lyon, Andrew Stothers, Sarah Kelleher, Rachel Harrison, to each of you I say: thank you for believing in me and thank you for keeping me sane. Two friends in particular must be specially thanked. Hannah Clardy—one of the greatest gifts this PhD process has given me is your friendship. Thank you for cheering me on every step of the way and for being a constant sounding board. Claire Aufhammer—from Baylor to St Andrews and beyond, thank you for your loyal friendship spanning universities, countries, and continents. Furthermore, our church family at Chalmers Church Edinburgh has been a source of continuous refuge and refreshment. I would like to particularly thank Robin and Sally Sydserff, our home group, and Chalmers Church Youth for loving and supporting us through some very difficult years.

I would have never made it to this point without the constant love and encouragement of my parents, Tom and Kim Drain. Thank you for urging me to pursue my dreams—even when that involved moving halfway around the world. Thank you also to my father-in-law, Callum Tooth, for your kindness and constant interest in my work. And to Gillian: "one short sleep past" and we shall be together with Christ forever.

The greatest thanks must go to my husband, who has sacrificed so much to make this dream of mine a reality. Thank you, Doug, for all that you are and for all that you inspire me to be. This thesis is dedicated to you, with all my love and gratitude.

INTRODUCTION

If one were to survey the vast mountain of secondary literature in Pauline scholarship, one could be forgiven for believing that Galatians and Romans are the letters that really matter. This is not to say that there are not gargantuan piles of research on the rest of the Pauline corpus, but simply that in the broader discussions about Pauline literature and theology these two letters tend to dominate. This phenomenon is easy to explain given the focus on justification that has typically directed Pauline studies, particularly since the Reformation. Two letters that have often been side-lined as a result of this emphasis on justification are 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Neither of these letters contains language that would contribute to the debate, such as the δικαι- word group, and the closest either comes to addressing justification is the ambiguous statement found in 1 Thess 5:9-10: "For God has not appointed us for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us."[1] Instead, the prime focus of both letters is on topics such as the *parousia* and the day of the Lord, the resurrection of the dead, and the timing of God's future judgment.

For around seventeen centuries, 1 and 2 Thessalonians were understood as Paul's two-part communication with the community of Christ-followers that he, along with Timothy and Silvanus, established in Thessalonica. As with most of Paul's letters, it was only with the advent of historical criticism in the eighteenth century that questions began

[1] New Testament citations are from NA[28], Hebrew Bible citations are from *BHS*, and Greek Jewish scripture citations are from Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart, eds., *Septuaginta*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006). Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own. For abbreviations I follow *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: SBL, 2014).

to be raised about their authenticity. F. C. Baur, for example, argued that both were pseudonymous.[2] While, despite Baur, the authenticity of 1 Thessalonians has been maintained over the years and it is firmly established as genuine, 2 Thessalonians remains a highly disputed letter, and the current debate is at a stalemate. This is another reason that 2 Thessalonians, in particular, has often been overlooked. It could further be argued that the sheer murkiness of 2 Thessalonians, with its unique and mysterious figures like the "man of lawlessness" and "the restrainer," keeps scholars at arm's length. However, both of these letters—whatever their authorship—provide rich material from Paul or the Pauline school on the nature of Jesus's return and God's impending judgment. Eschatology is arguably the most important theme in both 1 and 2 Thessalonians. In fact, it is the nature of their eschatologies that raises the most questions for the authorship of 2 Thessalonians, with many scholars considering 2 Thessalonians and its emphasis on a timeline of events that must still happen before the day of the Lord completely incompatible with the eschatology present in 1 Thessalonians, which seems to emphasise a sudden and impending arrival of the day of the Lord. In this thesis, my goal is to examine both of the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians and thoroughly compare them in the hope of moving forward the debate on authorship and the place of these two letters within Pauline theology.

[2] F. C. Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ, His Life and Work, His Epistles and His Doctrine: A Contribution to a Critical History of Primitive Christianity*, 2nd ed., ed. Eduard Zeller, trans. A. Menzies, 2 vols., Theological Translation Fund Library 1 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1873-1875), 2:85-97.

TERMINOLOGY

Two terms heavily debated in this area of research are "eschatology" and "apocalyptic." Furthermore, the relationship of these two terms is greatly disputed; some scholars have argued that we should understand them as designating the same concept, while others have argued for a strict distinction between the two. Therefore, both need clarification.

Eschatology

As has been repeatedly noted, eschatology is a relatively modern term first used in the seventeenth century[3] and so is an artificial category, certainly not a term Paul or any of the New Testament writers would have recognised. Furthermore, the term has been used with a multitude of different meanings over its relatively short history.[4] From the Greek ἐσχάτος, eschatology simply means discourse on "the last things," though there is considerable debate around what those "last things" are and whether they are in any sense already realised in the present. In its earliest use, topics covered by the term included the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, the end of the world, hell, and eternal life.

[3] According to Jörg Frey, "New Testament Eschatology—An Introduction: Classical Issues, Disputed Themes, and Current Perspectives," in *Eschatology of the New Testament and Some Related Documents*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 3-32, 6, Philipp Heinrich Friedlieb appears to be the first to use this term in 1644: *Eschatologia seu Florilegium theologicum exhibens locorum de morte, resurrection mortuorum, extreme iudicio, consummation seculi, inferno seu morte aeterna et denique vita aeterna*.

[4] For a more thorough overview of the history of "eschatology," see Frey, "New Testament Eschatology," 3-32; D. E. Aune, "Eschatology (Early Christian)," *ABD* 2:594-609.

This focus on future events within New Testament studies is associated with Johannes Weiss[5] and Albert Schweitzer,[6] who both argued for a "consistent" (or "consequent" or "thoroughgoing") eschatology in which Jesus is understood as a preacher of an imminent end to history. In contrast to this futurist perspective, C. H. Dodd argued for a "realised eschatology" in which Jesus's preaching about the kingdom of God was not future-oriented but rather concerned with the present reality; in other words, the kingdom of God was not soon-to-come but already present.[7] As the twentieth century developed, eschatology started to be used in reference to existential realities, not just temporal events. For example, Bultmann argues, "Eschatology in a true Christian understanding of it is not the future end of history, but history is swallowed up by eschatology."[8] That is, with Christ, history has in fact ended, and the Christian existence is thus eschatological and to be lived in response to God's presence. Partially in reaction to Bultmann, Oscar Cullmann attempted to combine the views of Dodd and Schweitzer into an "inaugurated eschatology," famously illustrating the relationship of Jesus's death and resurrection and the *parousia* with the analogy of the decisive battle in a war (e.g. D-day) and "Victory Day."[9] In this view, God's kingdom has come into the present world in certain ways through the death and resurrection of Jesus, but it will not be fully realised until the final victory of Jesus

[5] Johannes Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892).
[6] Albert Schweitzer, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede: Eeine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1906); idem., *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forshung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1913).
[7] C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London: Nisbet, 1935).
[8] Rudolf Bultmann, "History and Eschatology in the New Testament," *NTS* 1 (1954): 5-16, 16.
[9] Oscar Cullmann, *Christus und die Zeit: Die urchristliche Zeit- und Geschichtsauffassung* (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1946), 72-73, 127-128.

in his *parousia*. Thus, decisive eschatological events have indeed been fulfilled but there are more yet to come, and we live in the tension between inauguration and consummation, the tension between the "already-now" and the "not-yet." As can be seen in this very brief overview, in the span of less than 400 years from the first use of "eschatology," scholars have developed complex and opposing understandings of what it means.

More recently, however, it has been recognised that both Second Temple Jewish writers and the New Testament writers also had diverse eschatological views that cannot easily be harmonised.[10] Though the main divide as seen above has generally been between present-oriented eschatology and future-oriented eschatology, we must be aware of both aspects in the New Testament texts. Yet, these aspects likely cannot be understood as completely separated, for there may be future events that also impact the present or are initiated in the present, nor are the two perspectives necessarily logically incompatible.[11] I am by no means able to give an overarching definition for eschatology that will satisfy its full range of use in the New Testament texts and in theology. However, as will become obvious in the exegesis, both 1 and 2 Thessalonians are certainly future-oriented, and both point forward to events that will happen in a future time period that can be termed the

[10] As David Luckensmeyer, *The Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, NTOA 71 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 2, argues, "The eschatologies of early Jewish and Christian writers are so diverse that it is more accurate to steer clear of generic definitions." Cf. Frey, "New Testament Eschatology," 20.

[11] Frey, "New Testament Eschatology," 19, notes, "it appears textually inappropriate (and rather inspired from modern theological ideas) to construct a logical contradiction between future-orientation and present-orientation, as if an awareness of fulfilment or the gift of life in the present should exclude any kind of further expectation. In earliest Christianity, the opposite seems to have happened. The view that some Biblical promises had been fulfilled in Jesus' coming or his acts, in his resurrection or in the gift of the Spirit, apparently rather intensified the hope for the completion in a near future."

"eschaton" or "end times," by which I mean the period of time leading up to and including the definitive event, or events, in which God and/or other superhuman agents intervene in human history in a final way, such that the resulting aeon is categorically different from what has preceded. Thus, in the current thesis, I use eschatology to designate any passages dealing with events that are related to the "end times," such as the *parousia*, the day of the Lord, the resurrection of the dead, future judgment or wrath, and certain events that must take place in the lead up to this such as the revelation of the man of lawlessness. However, though these events certainly should be understood as still future in the author's mind, they may be seen to have significant impact on the present identity and experience of the audience; this will be shown in the exegesis below.

Apocalyptic

"Apocalyptic" is one of the most contentious terms in recent Pauline studies, given its multivalent connotations. Like "eschatology," "apocalyptic" is a modern term derived from Greek, in this case from the word ἀποκάλυπσις, which literally means "uncovering" or "revelation." It was first introduced (as the German *Apokalyptik*) in 1832 by Gottfried Christian Friedrich Lücke in his work on the Book of Revelation to describe its literary context.[12] Yet there has long been a lack of clarity in scholarship over what precisely is meant by "apocalyptic." On the one hand, it has been understood as describing a specific genre of literature, usually including Daniel, Revelation, 1 Enoch, 2 Enoch, Jubilees,

[12] Gottfried Christian Friedrich Lücke, *Versuch einer vollständigen Einleitung in die Offenbarung Johanis und in die gesamte apokalzptische Literatur* (Bonn: Weber, 1832).

2 Baruch, 3 Baruch, 4 Ezra (2 Esdras), Apocalypse of Abraham, Testament of Abraham, Testament of Levi, Testament of Naphtali, Ascension of Isaiah, Shepherd of Hermas, and 3 Enoch.[13] On the other hand, it can describe a type of theology found in such texts—especially a focus on the dichotomous dualism of the "two ages." In the 1970s, scholars attempted to more precisely define what was meant by "apocalyptic." Paul Hanson distinguishes between "apocalypse" as a literary genre, "apocalyptic eschatology" as a perspective or worldview found in this genre (by which futurist eschatology is generally meant, in reliance on the "historical apocalypses"), and "apocalypticism" as a social movement.[14] These distinctions suggest that even if a text is not an apocalypse, it can contain apocalyptic eschatology or apocalypticism. John J. Collins maintains a similar threefold distinction,[15] but his most significant contribution is defining apocalypse as "a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another supernatural world."[16] This definition has gained wide acceptance, though

[13] This list is taken from Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1982), 15.

[14] P. D. Hanson, "Apocalypticism," *IDBSup* 28-34.

[15] John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 2-11.

[16] John J. Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," in *Semeia 14. Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, ed. John J. Collins (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1979): 1-20, 9. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 48 objects to the emphasis on eschatology, arguing instead that revelation is the constitutive element of an apocalypse. However, Benjamin E. Reynolds and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "Introduction," in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition and the Shaping of New Testament Thought*, ed. Reynolds and Stuckenbruck (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017): 1-14, note that in Collins's definition "Eschatological salvation does not require an end-of-the-world scenario; instead, it may describe the way that apocalyptic literature gives hope to the righteous by looking beyond death" (6).

it is not without its critics. Martinus C. de Boer, for one, objects, "It may thus be better to think of an apocalypse as a smaller literary genre (*Form*) akin to prayer, parable or hymn, and not as a larger literary genre (*Gattung*) for a whole book such as letter, gospel, or history. By this definition, Mark 13 and 1 Thess. 4:13-18 are apocalypses (as generally recognized), but Mark and 1 Thessalonians, of course, are not."[17] In contrast, Collins has recently argued that literature that is not strictly an "apocalypse" can still be regarded as "apocalyptic" if "it bears some resemblance to the core features of the genre apocalypse."[18] This, I think, is a better way to understand the relationship between texts such as 1 Thess 4:13-18 and an actual apocalypse—analogy, not identity.

In a parallel discussion, "apocalyptic" has been applied to a particular understanding of Paul and his theology, initiated by Ernst Käsemann, who argues, "Paul's apostolic self-consciousness is only comprehensible on the basis of his apocalyptic."[19] By "apocalyptic" Käsemann means "the expectation of an imminent Parousia," thus equating it with eschatology.[20] Scholars such as J. Christiaan Beker, J. Louis Martyn, Martinus

[17] Martinus C. de Boer, "Apocalyptic as God's Eschatological Activity in Paul's Theology," in *Paul and the Apocalyptic Imagination*, ed. Ben C. Blackwell, John K. Goodrich, Jason Maston (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016), 45-64, 47n9.
[18] John J. Collins, "What Is Apocalyptic Literature?" in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. John J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 1-16, 6. Though, Jörg Frey, "Demythologizing Apocalyptic? On N. T. Wright's Paul, Apocalyptic Interpretation, and the Constraints of Construction," in *God and the Faithfulness of Paul*, ed. Christoph Heilig, J. Thomas Hewitt, and Michael F. Bird (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 516, gives a necessary caveat: "there is no motif or theme that is represented in all apocalypses or related texts. Therefore, any attempt to define precisely apocalyptic according to a particular feature such as pseudonymity, symbolism, cosmology, future-oriented eschatology, or a 'dualism' of two ages, etc. must necessarily fall short of accurately accounting for the wide range of apocalyptic thought."
[19] Ernst Käsemann, "On the Subject of Primitive Christian Apocalyptic," in *New Testament Questions of Today*, ed. Ernst Käsemann, trans. W. J. Montague (London: SCM, 1969), 108-137, 131.
[20] Ibid., 109n1.

de Boer, Beverly Roberts Gaventa, and Douglas Campbell have followed in Käsemann's footsteps, forming a group recognised as the "apocalyptic Paul" school.[21] Though each scholar has his or her own interpretation of what it means for Paul to be apocalyptic, they generally position themselves in opposition to salvation-historical continuity and highlight God's punctiliar invasion into the world, discontinuous with history; thus, there is an emphasis on the dichotomy of the "two ages." However, "apocalyptic Paul" scholars have been repeatedly criticised for failing to engage fully with the diversity of apocalypses and the complex thought represented by these varied books.[22] In particular, J. P. Davies demonstrates that Second Temple apocalypses do not portray a dichotomy between salvation history and "two-ages dualism" in their eschatological perspectives; instead, Davies argues, "These apocalypses, while affirming the duality of the 'two ages,' nevertheless express a concern for the importance of redemptive history; the two eschatological themes are placed together in a creative and poetic tension. Setting the linear against the punctiliar under the banner of 'apocalyptic' is arguably to assert a false

[21] J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980); J. Louis Martyn, "Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul's Letter to the Galatians," *NTS* 31 (1985): 410-424; idem., *Galatians: A New Translation, with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1997); Martinus C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death: Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988); Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007); Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

[22] Frey, "Demythologizing Apocalyptic?" 520, "We can see that the concepts of apocalyptic applied by Käsemann, Martyn, and de Boer are inappropriate in view of the variety of the Jewish apocalyptic texts." N. T. Wright, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters: Some Contemporary Debates* (London: SPCK, 2015), 139: "'Apocalyptic' is not 'dualistic' in and of itself. That is, it might or might not be; but the fact that a piece of writing exhibits the signs of the genre we may call 'apocalyptic' does not itself indicate dualism."

dichotomy unsupported by the texts themselves."[23] The "apocalyptic Paul" school certainly is on solid ground in setting Paul within a context of Jewish apocalyptic literature, given its prevalence in Second Temple Judaism, but in general they have failed to properly represent what this literature contains and how Paul is influenced by it. The weaknesses of the "apocalyptic Paul" school should caution us against homogenising the diverse perspectives represented in Second Temple apocalyptic literature. Further, this confusion over the theological meaning of "apocalyptic" urges us to define it in light of what is actually found in literary apocalypses.

As will become clear in the exegesis below, it is undeniable that 1 and 2 Thessalonians interact with and develop Jewish apocalyptic tradition and contain motifs shared with apocalypses.[24] Thus, it is necessary to describe such elements as "apocalyptic." Not wishing to enter the fray of the "apocalyptic Paul" debates, nor to predetermine the nature of the eschatological thought in 1 and 2 Thessalonians (especially if neither is written by Paul), in this thesis I will use the word "apocalyptic" to describe these shared images, motifs, and theology when they appear, guided by Collins's definition of "apocalypse." Since it is important to recognise the great diversity of apocalyptic literature

[23] J. P. Davies, *Paul Among the Apocalypses? An Evaluation of the 'Apocalyptic Paul' in the Context of Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic Literature*, LSNT 562 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 109. Davies argues that these book are better understood as having "inaugurated eschatology" in that "The age to come has, to be sure, broken into this world, but that does not mean that there is no continuing eschatological role to be played by the present age" (106). Cf. Frey, "Demythologizing Apocalyptic?" 523.

[24] This fact is significant given the general lack of attention paid to the Thessalonian correspondence by these "apocalyptic Paul" scholars.

and thought, when something is described as "apocalyptic" it will be done with reference to particular apocalyptic books such as Daniel, Revelation, 1 Enoch, and others.[25]

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

In this thesis, I propose a different approach to examining 1 and 2 Thessalonians than is usually employed: I will leave aside the issue of authorship until after the two letters have been examined separately. The authorship of 2 Thessalonians in particular remains a highly contested issue, and commentators continue to make their interpretive decisions based on their predetermined stance on authorship. For example, on the basis of pseudonymity 2 Thessalonians is regularly understood as either refuting the eschatology of 1 Thessalonians[26] or re-interpreting it for a new situation (e.g. in light of the delay of the *parousia*).[27] But what if the eschatology of 2 Thessalonians were to be examined on its own merits? What new insights could we gain from this? This suggests the need for an exegesis of 2 Thessalonians that does not decide authorship in advance. Furthermore, nearly every study of the Thessalonian correspondence has proceeded with the assumption that

[25] In this, I follow Collins's thought described above in which a text can be "apocalyptic" without being an "apocalypse" by analogy to the genre.

[26] H. Holtzmann, "Zum zweiten Thessalonicherbrief," *ZNW* 2 (1901): 97-108 and Andreas Lindemann, "Zum Abfassungszweck des Zweiten Thessalonicherbriefs," *ZNW* 68 (1977): 35-47 both argue that the author of 2 Thess seeks to replace 1 Thess and to eliminate the idea of an imminent *parousia* from Christian theology.

[27] For example, M. Eugene Boring, *I & II Thessalonians*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015), 209, 226-227, argues that 2 Thessalonians is an interpretation of 1 Thessalonians, helping a post-Pauline community understand that the end is not coming soon so they need to prepare to endure hardships for the foreseeable future.

1 Thessalonians is a genuine Pauline letter.[28] Thus, the authorship of 1 Thessalonians must be reconsidered as well, for by assuming Pauline authorship we may also overlook important aspects of this letter which have been harmonised to fit with a wider Pauline theology. Therefore, the authorship of the two letters will not be reconsidered until the final chapter, once each letter is independently analysed and the two eschatologies have been compared. I am not the first to propose this method; indeed it has been inspired by the SBL Pauline Theology Consultation's work in the 1980s-1990s in which they examined each Pauline letter on its own terms before producing a synthesis of Pauline theology.[29] This process brought out many distinctive features of each letter that had often been overlooked in previous accounts of Pauline theology. Similarly, Colin Nicholl (whose work will be discussed further below) likewise leaves authorship decisions on 2 Thessalonians until the end in his analysis of the text, though he does presuppose Pauline authorship of 1 Thessalonians.[30] However, for the great majority of treatments of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, authorship continues to be determined first and interpretative decisions made in light of these conclusions.

In some ways, my method necessarily produces an artificial interpretation. All letters have a particular author who has a particular intention and writes to a particular audience with particular problems. By bracketing out authorship, there is a danger that

[28] A notable exception is Marlene Crüsemann, *Die pseudepigraphen Briefe an die Gemeinde in Thessaloniki: Studien zu ihrer Abfassung und zur jüdisch-christlichen Sozialgeschichte*, BWANT 191 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2010).
[29] The results of this project have been published in Jouette M. Bassler, David M. Hay, E. Elizabeth Johnson, eds., *Pauline Theology*, 4 vols., SBLSymS 4, 21-23 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991-1997).
[30] Colin Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair in Thessalonica: Situating 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, SNTSMS 126 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

this particularity will be overlooked. Ultimately, correct interpretation must take into account the situation of the author and the audience, as far as that can be determined. I will focus on the evidence explicitly present in the text itself, which does limit some decisions. However, by following the logic of the arguments, I will be able to draw inferences that are not dependent on an exact context. Since both letters are intentionally located by the author(s) in the Pauline tradition, the Pauline letters form the closest comparison material, though they are not determinative for interpretation. I will also analyse these letters with reference to the rest of the New Testament, the Jewish scriptures and pseudepigrapha, and other Graeco-Roman literature to allow the full range of possible interpretations.

The main goal of this thesis is a thorough analysis and comparison of the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Before the two letters can be compared, however, the eschatology of each letter must first be examined independently. In the first chapter of this study I analyse the eschatological passages of 1 Thessalonians—these are identified by content and key terms such as *parousia*, "the day of the Lord," or related material. The passages thus identified and examined are 1 Thess 1:9-10, 2:13-16, 2:19-20, 3:13, 4:13-18, 5:1-11, and 5:23-24. I follow the canonical order in treating the two letters, though this order must be reconsidered when it comes to deciding on authorship and date in the final chapter. I thoroughly analyse each of these passages and then produce an overview of eschatology in 1 Thessalonians. In the second chapter I examine 2 Thess 1:4-12, 2:1-12, and 3:6-15. As in chapter 1, I analyse each of these passages and then provide an overview of eschatology in 2 Thessalonians. In the third chapter, I compare the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians

as outlined in the first two chapters. This chapter will focus on questions of coherence and consistency and determine how compatible the two letters are on the basis of their eschatologies. The individual analyses and the comparison raise important questions about tradition history, so in the fourth chapter I examine possible explanations for a shared eschatological tradition between the Thessalonian correspondence and the Synoptic eschatological discourse. In the final chapter, I am at last able to treat issues of critical introduction, particularly focusing on the issue of authorship in light of the preceding discussions.

RECENT RESEARCH ON ESCHATOLOGY IN THE THESSALONIAN CORRESPONDENCE

Though the Thessalonian correspondence has often been side-lined in favour of the *Hauptbriefe*, there is still a rich and mammoth body of scholarship on these two letters.[31] There was a noted uptick in interest in 1 and 2 Thessalonians in the 1970s and 1980s. One reason for this increased interest was Abraham Malherbe's work in which he considered the Graeco-Roman philosophical background of the letters; in particular, this encouraged a new focus on rhetorical criticism of the letters.[32] Additionally, the SBL Seminar on the

[31] For wider treatments of the secondary literature, see Raymond F. Collins "Recent Scholarship on Paul," in *Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians*, ed. Raymond F. Collins, BETL 66 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1984), 3-75; Earl Richard, "Contemporary Research on 1 (& 2) Thessalonians," *BTB* 20 (1990): 107-115; Jeffrey A. D. Weima and Stanley A. Porter, *An Annotated Bibliography of 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, NTTS 26 (Leiden: Brill, 1998); Stanley E. Porter, "Developments in German and French Thessalonians Research: A Survey and Critique," *CurBS* 7 (1999): 309-334; Sean A. Adams, "Evaluating 1 Thessalonians: An Outline of Holistic Approaches to 1 Thessalonians in the Last 25 Years," *CBR* 8 (2009): 51-70.

[32] Abraham J. Malherbe, "'Gentle as a Nurse': The Cynic Background to 1 Thess. ii," *NovT* 12 (1970): 203-217; "Exhortation in First Thessalonians," *NovT* 25 (1983): 238-256. He furthers develops this

Thessalonian Correspondence met for five years from 1979 to 1983, the SBL Pauline Theology Consultation from 1985 to 1995 considered 1 and 2 Thessalonians in their first segment,[33] and the *Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense* also dedicated their 1988 colloquium to an extensive examination of 1 and 2 Thessalonians.[34] Due to the nature of the two letters, many of the resulting studies focused on particular eschatological elements. There have also been several significant monographs that include important analyses of Thessalonian eschatology as part of their larger projects. Additionally, a large number of commentaries have been published in the past 50 years, bringing further attention to the two letters.[35]

This history of research is specifically focused on the most significant articles or monographs which have attempted to explain the eschatological views of one or both letters holistically, rather than those studies that just focus on one particular eschatological

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work in *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) and *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 32B (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

[33] See Jouette M. Bassler, ed., *Pauline Theology. Volume I: Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon*, SBLSymS 21 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).

[34] The published papers can be found in Raymond F. Collins, ed. *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, BETL 87 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990).

[35] Among the multitude of commentaries that have been published in the past 50 years, the most important are: Wolfgang Trilling, *Der zweite Brief an die Thessalonicher*, EKKNT 14 (Zürich: Benziger: 1980); Traugott Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*, EKKNT 13 (Zürich: Benziger, 1986); Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990); Maarten J. J. Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, New Testament Readings (London: Routledge, 1994); Earl J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, SP 11 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995); Simon Légasse, *Les épîtres de Paul aux Thessaloniciens*, LD 7 (Paris: Cerf, 1999); Malherbe, *Thessalonians*; Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); Jeffrey A.D. Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014). Tobias Nicklas, *Der zweite Thessalonicherbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019) was not released in time to be incorporated into this thesis but promises to be an important contribution. Though outside the 50-year mark, the monumental contribution of Béda Rigaux, *Saint Paul. Les épitres aux Thessaloniciens*, *EBib* (Paris: Gabalda, 1956) continues to be a necessary discussion partner in any treatment of 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

aspect or passage. There are many such studies which have incisively covered specific issues.[36] The passage most extensively discussed in relation to eschatology in the first letter is 1 Thess 4:13-18, with a major debate over whether the images are influenced by the Hellenistic or Jewish imagery and traditions.[37] By far the most covered passage in 2 Thessalonians is 2:1-12, especially the identity of the κατέχον/κατέχων.[38] I will engage with all of these important studies in the exegesis below, but will not give an overview of each of them here since my main concern in this work is with the eschatologies of the letters as a whole. Thus, I will review the most significant contributions of those who have covered eschatology in the whole of 1 and/or 2 Thessalonians over the past 50 years, since the surge of interest in the 1970s.

[36] For example, Matthias Konradt, *Gericht und Gemeinde. Eine Studie zur Bedeutung und Funktion von Gerichtsaussagen im Rahmen der paulinischen Ekklesiologie und Ethik im 1 Thess und 1 Kor*, BZNW 117 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003) addresses judgment sayings in Paul's theology, focusing on relevant passages in 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians. Michael W. Pahl, *Discerning the 'Word of the Lord': The 'Word of the Lord' in 1 Thessalonians 4:15*, LNTS 389 (London: T&T Clark, 2009) examines the question of the "word of the Lord" in 1 Thess 4:15; Eckart David Schmidt *Heilig ins Eschaton: Heiligung und Heiligkeit als eschatologische Konzeption im 1. Thessalonicherbrief*, BZNW 167 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) treats sanctification and holiness as eschatological concepts in 1 Thessalonians; James R. Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities at Thessalonica and Rome: A Study in the Conflict of Ideology*, WUNT 273 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) argues that Paul intentionally opposes Roman ideology in 1 Thess 4:13-5:11 and 2 Thess 2:1-12.

[37] Erik Peterson, "Die Einholung des Kyrios," *ZST* 7 (1930): 682-702 argues that this passage uses the terminology of Hellenistic formal receptions; Jacques Dupont, *ΣΥΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΩΙ: L'Union avec le Christ suivant Saint Paul* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952) claims the Sinai theophany is the prototype for 4:13-18; Joseph Plevnik, "The Taking Up of the Faithful and the Resurrection of the Dead in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18," *CBQ* 46 (1984): 274-283 argues that Jewish assumption scenes stand behind this passage.

[38] Otto Betz, "Der Katechon," *NTS* 9 (1963): 276-291; Charles H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith: An Exegetical and Theological Re-examination of 2 Thessalonians 2*, AnBib 31 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967); L. J. Lietaert Peerbolte, "The KATEXON/KATEXΩN of 2 Thess. 2:6-7," *NovT* 39 (1997): 138-150.

Eschatology in 1 and 2 Thessalonians

Near the beginning of this increased interest in the Thessalonian letters, C. L. Mearns argued that, in contrast to the typical view that Paul's theology developed later in life, it is probable that the largest change in his eschatology occurred shortly before he wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians.[39] Mearns argues that Paul's earliest communities had a realised eschatology, seeing the exaltation of Jesus as the fulfilment of eschatological hopes.[40] However, as community members started dying, this view was challenged, and Paul had to reconceptualise the *parousia* as a return of Jesus and move to a futurist eschatology. Mearns argues that this process is seen in 1 Thessalonians, especially in 1 Thess 4:13-18 where Paul has to tell the Thessalonians about the resurrection of the dead which they were not aware of before because they believed they were already risen. Paul also tries to dampen the charismatic enthusiasm of the Thessalonians that was a result of this realised eschatology. However, there is little in the letter that could actually support this portrait of the Thessalonians, and Mearns interposes the problems in Corinth onto 1 Thessalonians in order to arrive at this interpretation. Interestingly, Mearns admits that the eschatology of 2 Thessalonians is different from 1 Thessalonians, which he says is why Paul had to go to such lengths to authenticate it. According to Mearns, some of the Thessalonians had so thoroughly embraced the futurist eschatology of 1 Thessalonians that he had to dampen their enthusiastic expectation by introducing signs that must first come before the *parousia*. Paul's eschatology developed from "thoroughgoing realized eschatology, then in

[39] C. L. Mearns, "Early Eschatological Development in Paul: The Evidence of I and II Thessalonians," *NTS* 27 (1981): 137-157.
[40] Ibid., 138.

I Thess. he moved to an imminentist Christian apocalyptic; now in II Thess. he moved to a Christian apocalyptic scheme which was deferred by a signs-sequence as a prelude to the final Day of the Lord."[41] These moves all happened in response to his community, which means Mearns views Paul's theology as highly contingent and open to development. Ultimately, Mearns offers an intriguing challenge to the prevailing thought that Paul's theology developed gradually, but his conclusions go beyond the limit of the evidence present in the letters.

Like Mearns, Richard Longenecker was also interested in Paul's theological development, and in 1985 he wrote an article examining an early aspect of Paul's theology.[42] In this article, Longenecker focuses on eschatology in both 1 and 2 Thessalonians, particularly on three main aspects, which he claims are often overlooked: (1) "the place of eschatology in the structure of the Thessalonian letters," (2) "the basis for eschatological hope in the Thessalonian letters," and (3) "the purpose of the eschatological presentations in the Thessalonian letters."[43] Longenecker argues that eschatology should not be understood as the main purpose of 1 Thessalonians, for the high point of the letter is Paul's defence of himself and his encouragement of the audience in the face of their suffering. Furthermore, according to Longenecker, in both 1 and 2 Thessalonians the eschatological material is based on Jesus's resurrection and teachings and is meant to be pastoral, not speculative. He ultimately concludes, "Paul's basic Christian conviction and the starting point for all his Christian theology was not apocalypticism but functional Christology—

[41] Ibid., 153.
[42] Richard N. Longenecker, "The Nature of Paul's Early Eschatology," *NTS* 31 (1985): 85-95.
[43] Ibid., 88, 89, 93.

that is, that his commitment was not first of all to a programme or some timetable of events but to a person: Jesus the Messiah."[44] It is through reflection on the identity and action of Jesus that Paul's eschatology developed over the course of his ministry. This is certainly a reasonable conclusion and is a helpful contribution to the discussion of Paul's theological development. However, Longenecker has downplayed the role of eschatology in 1 Thessalonians, for it is by no means the case that 4:13-5:11 "seem[s] almost tacked on as [an] afterthought" since eschatology permeates the entire letter; it is surely a more important aspect than he allows.[45] Additionally, Longenecker assumes that 2 Thessalonians is Pauline without any supporting argument, which means he ignores the potential difficulties a pseudonymous 2 Thessalonians could bring to his argument.

In 1986, Robert Jewett published his *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, which has proved to be one of the most important treatments of 1 and 2 Thessalonians as it was the first study to thoroughly examine the social context of the Christ-followers at Thessalonica and why eschatology is the main focus of these letters. Jewett's thesis is "that Paul was faced with a situation of millenarian radicalism in Thessalonica not matched elsewhere in early Christianity."[46] According to Jewett, this situation was caused by persecution faced by the community as well as the death of several members, and in response Paul sent 1 Thessalonians. However, this letter did not rectify the situation and caused members of

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[44] Ibid., 93.
[45] Ibid., 88.
[46] Robert Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety*, FF (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), xiii. A similar argument appeared in a brief article the following year by Charles A. Wanamaker, "Apocalypticism at Thessalonica," *Neot* 21 (1987): 1-10. Wanamaker did not mention Jewett's extensive work even though he essentially agreed that the community at Thessalonica should be understood as a millenarian movement.

the group to become more excited, leading them to claim that "the day of the Lord had come." Paul then writes 2 Thessalonians in a sharper tone to try and stamp out the enthusiasm. Jewett first conducts a rhetorical analysis of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. He determines that 1 Thessalonians uses demonstrative/epideictic rhetoric to deal with issues among the Thessalonian community, such as persecution, death in the community, criticism of Paul's leadership, and sexual ethics.[47] This is an important contribution to Thessalonian scholarship, for many previous commentators had argued that the community addressed in 1 Thessalonians is one without any real problems. Instead, it is clear that 1 Thessalonians was written to deal with such issues before they developed into more serious problems.

In his treatment of the historical background of the letters, Jewett emphasises the importance of the Cabirus cult in Thessalonica and its influence on the early Christ-followers: "It is curious that this cult has not attracted more attention, because the structure of its myths and the nature of its piety can be more closely correlated with the evidence of the Thessalonian congregation than any of the other mystery religions."[48] In fact, the Cabirus cult is foundational for Jewett's reconstruction of the community, as he argues that the majority of Paul's converts were manual labourers who had previously been devoted to Cabirus.[49] Jewett further argues that the Cabirus cult had been co-opted to serve the interests of wealthier members of Thessalonian society, leaving a religious vacuum among the manual labourers, which was easily filled by the gospel message brought by Paul

[47] Ibid., 71-72; 91-109.
[48] Ibid., 128.
[49] Ibid., 161-178.

of a Saviour who would soon return.[50] It is true that the Cabirus cult was an official cult of Thessalonica during the Roman period.[51] However, the influence of the Cabirus cult on the early church in Thessalonica is highly disputed by scholars; this has been the most recurring critique of Jewett's work.[52] Furthermore, it is difficult to know what exactly followers of Cabirus believed, for the cult had a tendency to assimilate other cults and the literary evidence about this cult's particular beliefs is lacking. There is no clear evidence that Cabirus had been co-opted by the upper class, as argued by Jewett. As Barclay argues, "Not only does this hypothesis assume far more than we presently know about economic conditions in Thessalonica and the obscure cult of Cabirus, it also appears to be based on the false assumption that an apocalyptic ideology is necessarily founded on economic deprivation or fostered by it."[53] Additionally, Jewett's work has been critiqued for imposing a model of millenarianism onto the letters and making the data fit the model.[54] Because of these criticisms, Jewett's radical millenarian model has been generally dismissed; however,

[50] Ibid., 131: "The cooptation of the figure of the Cabirus, whose primary role had been to provide equality, aid, and succor for Greeks whose livelihood came from manual labor, left the craftsmen and laborers of Thessalonica without a viable benefactor."

[51] Holland Lee Hendrix, "Thessalonicans Honor Romans" (ThD diss., Harvard University, 1984), 148-154; Helmut Koester, "From Paul's Eschatology to the Apocalyptic Schemata of 2 Thessalonians," in *Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. Collins, 441-458 (442-445).

[52] For example, Richard, "Contemporary Research," 108; John M. G. Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," *CBQ* 55 (1993): 512-530, 519; Koester, "From Paul's Eschatology," 443-445.

[53] Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 520.

[54] As Koester, "From Paul's Eschatology," 445, critiques: "Once a model of pagan millenarianism has been invented and has been superimposed upon the Letters to the Thessalonians, all eschatological data of these two letters must be made to fit the same situation. Serious differences in the hermeneutical structure of the arguments of the two letters are no longer considered. As long as such data fit into the imaginary bag of pagan apocalypticism, they must all come from Paul's pen.... The features of religious thought of Paul and of his readers must be determined first of all by an analysis of the traditions used in this correspondence and of their interpretation in the letters themselves."

he has greatly impacted the debate by showing the issues already present in the community when 1 Thessalonians was written.

Largely in response to Jewett's work, John Barclay also examined 1 and 2 Thessalonians through a sociological approach.[55] The main goal for Barclay "is to highlight a feature which [Jewett] (along with many others) seriously underplays, namely, the conflict in Thessalonica between Christians and non-Christians."[56] He argues that there is real, external—not psychological—conflict between the believers and their nonbelieving peers and that this social harassment has impacted their understanding of the gospel. Like Jewett, Barclay believes the situation is one of highly charged eschatological expectation.[57] However, unlike Jewett, he thinks the problem in Thessalonica is members of the community who have given up work to preach full-time, aggravating relationships with their neighbours. For Barclay, then, the cause of eschatological enthusiasm is not economic deprivation but social harassment. One particularly interesting feature of Barclay's study is his examination of the eschatological material in 4:13-5:11. He notes, "when Paul discusses the visible descent of Christ from heaven in 4:13-18 he talks of the *parousia* of Christ rather than 'the day of the Lord,' while in 5:1-11 he associates 'the day of the Lord' particularly with the sudden destruction of

[55] Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 512-530. Cf. John M. G. Barclay, "Thessalonica and Corinth: Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity," *JSNT* 47 (1992): 49-74. Barclay's conclusions were heavily expanded upon and developed by his doctoral student, Todd D. Still, in *Conflict at Thessalonica: A Pauline Church and Its Neighbours*, JSNTSup 183 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999).
[56] Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 512.
[57] Ibid., 517: "What led Paul to address the question of 'times and seasons' in 5:1-11 was not a waning of apocalyptic expectation but, precisely, the Thessalonians' restless impatience: they daily awaited the signs of the outpouring of God's wrath on unbelievers and their own rescue by the heavenly savior."

unbelievers (5:2-3)."[58] He also raises the possibility that a misunderstanding of this teaching lies behind the error in 2 Thessalonians, where some of the Thessalonians have interpreted a calamitous event such as war or famine to signal the arrival of the day of the Lord. This is an intriguing suggestion that deserves further consideration.

Refuting Jewett's emphasis on the pagan background of the Thessalonian community, Helmut Koester examines the apocalyptic traditions used in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, showing that both letters are informed by Jewish apocalyptic traditions.[59] However, Koester believes that the two letters use these traditions differently. He argues that Paul teaches a realised eschatology in 1 Thess 5:1-11 by making "the existence of the believers independent of the eschatological time table."[60] Because the Thessalonians already live an eschatological existence, they do not need to be worried about the timing of the day of the Lord. Thus, in 1 Thessalonians, though there is still an expectation of future events, "the distance between presence and future is made almost irrelevant."[61] The focus is on building up the present community to live distinctly from those influenced by Roman ideology. In contrast, the author of 2 Thessalonians uses the traditional apocalyptic timetable to increase the distance between the present and the future. Koester's emphasis on the Jewish apocalyptic background for the two letters is much more convincing than Jewett's argument for a pagan cultic background. However, it is not as clear that

[58] Ibid., 527.
[59] Koester, "From Paul's Eschatology."
[60] Ibid., 454.
[61] Ibid., 457.

1 Thessalonians conflates the present and future as much as Koester claims, for there is a strongly futurist perspective in this letter that must be taken seriously.

Colin Nicholl also extensively treats the eschatological elements of 1 and 2 Thessalonians in his work, *From Hope to Despair in Thessalonica*. His main goal is to analyse the situational background of the two letters because he believes that all the arguments against the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians are resolved once the situational background is determined. In contrast to Jewett and Barclay, Nicholl does not believe the community was caught up in eschatological enthusiasm. Instead, his hypothesis is that the situational background was one in which the Thessalonians had lost all their hope and were living in despair. In his view, 1 and 2 Thessalonians "represented two stages of a *single* crisis ultimately rooted in a misinterpretation of the deaths" in the community.[62] Part of Nicholl's argument is that the Thessalonian community did not have knowledge about the general resurrection of the dead because Paul had not previously taught them about it and so they were distraught when community members died before the *parousia*; furthermore, the community feared their own sudden eschatological destruction in light of these deaths. Overall, Nicholl argues that 1 Thessalonians was written to address a new gentile community of believers who were not eschatologically enthusiastic but instead lacked hope and were anxious because of the death of some of their community members. According to Nicholl, Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians as an appendix to 1 Thessalonians in response to a second stage in this crisis of faith—or better, crisis of hope—in which the

[62] Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 16.

Thessalonians believed that the day of the Lord had come and thus salvation had bypassed them.

Nicholl's work is important for challenging the prevailing understanding of the Thessalonian situation in which the community is over-excited, though few have followed his conclusion that they are a community wholly lacking in hope. His suggestion that the two letters were written within weeks of each other is interesting, though he is not the first to suggest this.[63] One of his most significant contributions to the debate is a lengthy discussion on the identification of "the restrainer" as Michael; his earlier article is reproduced in an appendix and remains a convincing solution to this perennial problem. Following the consensus, Nicholl examines 1 Thessalonians without arguing for its authenticity, though he does withhold judgment on the authorship of 2 Thessalonians until the end of his examination. Though Nicholl does focus on the eschatological elements of both letters and compares them to some extent, his goal is not an exhaustive comparison of their theologies, but rather an inquiry into their situations. An extended comparison between the theologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians continues to be missing in treatments of eschatology in the two letters.

Paul Foster, in his article, "The Eschatology of the Thessalonian Correspondence," addresses bigger questions of comparing the two eschatologies.[64] He first examines eschatology in 1 Thessalonians, assuming Pauline authorship, and focusing on 1:10, 2:19-20, 4:13-18, and 5:1-11. Foster demonstrates that Paul's eschatological teaching in

[63] For example, Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 528.
[64] Paul Foster, "The Eschatology of the Thessalonian Correspondence: An Exercise in Pastoral Pedagogy and Constructive Theology," *JSPL* 1 (2011): 57-82.

1 Thessalonians responds to "the apparently incorrect corollaries that some Thessalonian believers extracted from Paul's proclamation of the imminence of the parousia."[65] In response to this misunderstanding, according to Foster, Paul could either abandon his original eschatological teaching or re-organise it in a way that would support his pastoral goal of calling the Thessalonians to lead quiet and moral lives. Thus, Foster demonstrates that the eschatology of 1 Thessalonians is shaped by the circumstances of his audience and his own pastoral goals for them. Foster similarly treats eschatology in 2 Thessalonians, briefly arguing for Pauline authorship before examining 2 Thess 1:6-10 and 2:1-12, again highlighting the situational nature of Paul's eschatological teaching.[66] After analysing eschatology in both 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Foster turns to consider what type of thinker Paul was—that is, "whether Paul's theology was reactive and formulated in response to community crises and needs, or whether it was preformed and deployed in response to such situations as the need arose."[67] Foster notes though the Thessalonian correspondence has not been a large part of such discussions, these two letters and their relationship with each other should factor into the debate, for the analysis of eschatology has shown that Paul's theological conviction arise in two ways: "First there is a set of prior convictions, which are the central affirmations of his understanding of the gospel. Second, there are answers that Paul provides in response to the questions, needs, or situations that arise in

[65] Ibid., 69.
[66] Foster notes that even if his assumption of Pauline authorship "were found to be incorrect, this would not invalidate the observations that follow. It would simply show that eschatological thinking in early Pauline circles underwent a degree of modification" (ibid., 70).
[67] Ibid., 17.

his newly established communities."[68] Thus, Foster argues, the Thessalonian letters demonstrate the dynamic nature of Paul's theology.

Given that this is an article-length treatment of the subject, Foster's examination is understandably limited. For example, there are a variety of exegetical issues he is only able to briefly treat, such as the meaning of "a word of the Lord" in 1 Thess 4:15 or the τὸ κατέχον/ὁ κατέχων language in 2 Thess 2:6-7. He does not fully engage with the debate in either case, offering general comments about Paul's main meaning instead. Again, this is an understandable limitation. It does, however, demonstrate the need for a monograph-length treatment of eschatology in the two letters so that each aspect is fully covered. Thus, I will thoroughly examine the issues that Foster is only able to briefly highlight. Additionally, Foster makes a significant contribution to discussions of Paul's theology by demonstrating the subtle shifts in his eschatological teaching between his oral teaching and 1 Thessalonians, and between 1 and 2 Thessalonians. One is left to wonder, however, if the same conclusions about theological development would be reached on the assumption of pseudonymity for 2 Thessalonians.

In the same year that Foster's article appeared, Pieter de Villiers contributed two chapters to the edited volume, *Eschatology of the New Testament and Some Related Documents*, in which he considers the eschatology of 1 and 2 Thessalonians.[69] In his chapter on 1 Thessalonians, de Villiers highlights how Paul's eschatology is related to past, present,

[68] Ibid., 18.

[69] Pieter G. R. de Villiers, "In the Presence of God: The Eschatology of 1 Thessalonians," 302-332 and "The Glorious Presence of the Lord: The Eschatology of 2 Thessalonians," 333-361 in *Eschatology of the New Testament*, ed. van der Watt.

and future. For example, the past events of Jesus's death and resurrection determine the future for Paul—these events guarantee that Jesus will return to save his people and that those who have died will also be resurrected. God's future action impacts the Thessalonians' present experience by requiring a response in their daily lives. Thus, de Villiers demonstrates how "Paul's consistent use of eschatological material serves to call the Thessalonians to a holy lifestyle in the present."[70] One weakness of this chapter on 1 Thessalonians is that de Villiers does not make any reference to David Luckensmeyer's work (discussed below), which thoroughly treats eschatology in 1 Thessalonians; I would expect any subsequent treatment of eschatology in 1 Thessalonians to engage with Luckensmeyer, especially as he similarly argues that eschatology is the key to understanding Paul's exhortation in 1 Thessalonians.[71] In the second chapter, de Villiers examines the eschatology of 2 Thessalonians and then compares it to 1 Thessalonians, concluding that the two are not only compatible but very similar in outlook. He argues that in both 1 and 2 Thessalonians Paul "wishes to reassure them that their present situation must be viewed in the light of the future."[72] Ultimately, both letters point to the future where the community will be together in the presence of the Lord without any resistance. Because de Villiers determines authorship before examining eschatology, the results of his

[70] De Villiers, "In the Presence," 305. In this connection of eschatology and ethics, he acknowledges his dependence on B. N. Kaye, "Eschatology and Ethics in 1 and 2 Thessalonians," *NovT* (1975): 47-57; Gary S. Selby, "'Blameless at His Coming': The Discursive Construction of Eschatological Reality in 1 Thessalonians," *Rhetorica* 17 (1999): 385-410; and T. L. Howard, "The Literary Unity of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11," *Grace Theological Journal* 9 (1988): 163-190.
[71] Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 6. This omission is also noted by Paul Foster, "New Testament Eschatology," review of *Eschatology of the New Testament and Some Other Documents*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt, *ExpTim* 124 (2013): 517.
[72] De Villiers, "Glorious Presence," 357.

comparison between 1 and 2 Thessalonians simply affirm their compatibility. As with Foster's article, one wonders whether de Villiers would reach the same conclusions if he had examined 2 Thessalonians as a pseudonymous letter.

There has certainly been a large amount of research treating the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians from a variety of perspectives. Each of these studies contains some element of comparison between the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, though given that many of them do not focus solely on eschatology, these comparisons are necessarily limited. Furthermore, each of these studies presumes the authenticity of 1 Thessalonians without any thorough defence of this position.

Eschatology in 1 Thessalonians

Though most studies focus on specific aspects of eschatology in 1 Thessalonians,[73] there are several that aim to treat eschatology as a whole in the letter. Angus Paddison, reacting to what he sees as the weaknesses of the typical historical-critical approach, presents a theological reading of 1 Thessalonians, focusing in particular on the eschatology of the letter.[74] Paddison argues that a proper theological reading of the letter must not be tied to historical-critical methods of reading. His main problem with historical criticism is that it limits the meaning of the biblical texts to their historical context; this is what he terms

[73] For example, René Kieffer, "L'eschatologie en 1 Thessaloniciens dans une Perspective Rhetorique," in *Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. Collins, 206-219 only covers 4:13-18 and 5:1-11; Wolfgang Harnisch, *Eschatologische Existenz: Ein exegetischer Beitrag zum Sachanliegen von 1. Thessalonicher 4,13-5,11*, FRLANT 110 (Göttigen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973) also only treats 4:13-5:11.

[74] Angus Paddison, *Theological Hermeneutics and 1 Thessalonians*, SNTSMS 133 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

"historicism." The result of this method, according to Paddison, is that the actual subject matter of the text is not engaged with. Paddison presents Aquinas and Calvin as exemplars of theological interpreters of 1 Thessalonians, arguing that both understand the subject matter of the letter to be "God's eschatological triumph in Christ."[75] Paddison then offers his own theological interpretation of the letter, claiming that the subject matter—the "ultimate meaning"—of the letter is "God's all-powerful hold over death."[76] While Paddison's is certainly an innovative reading of the texts, his method of course relies upon theological presuppositions about divine revelation and the nature of truth. Notably, he limits correct interpretation to the church: "The truth and meaning of 1 Thessalonians reside within the relationship of creative tension between the text, the world of meanings opened up by the text, and its faithful location within the worship, life and tradition of the church."[77] Thus, one will likely only accept Paddison's methods if one first accepts his theological presuppositions.

Furthermore, Paddison's goals are different from those of historical-critical scholars, and it is unclear that they really deserve all the criticism he levels against them. Paddison's method can never answer questions such as whether the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians are compatible since for him the whole canon works together. Furthermore, his interpretation gives very little insight to certain difficult exegetical questions. For example, he does not engage with the nature of the "word of the Lord" in 1 Thess 4:15, a notoriously difficult phrase to interpret. This is not to say that a theological

[75] Ibid., 134.
[76] Ibid., 148.
[77] Ibid., 46.

interpretation is invalid, for it certainly is useful in particular contexts. Rather, the nature of questions asked is simply different from those asked by historical criticism.[78] Since my goal in the current work is to thoroughly examine and compare the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, historical-critical methods are the most appropriate for the questions raised.

In an article published in 1999, Gary Selby examines Paul's eschatological discourse in 1 Thessalonians, arguing that "Paul's persistent reference to the ideas and images of Christian eschatology represents a strategic attempt to deal with the exigencies of the rhetorical situation to which the epistle is addressed."[79] Selby shows how the whole letter is structured around eschatological pronouncements, and he argues that each of these statements is important for Paul's rhetorical goal, observing that previous research on rhetoric in 1 Thessalonians has overlooked the importance of these eschatological statements.[80] Though he does not thoroughly examine the content of each of these statements, Selby does helpfully show how eschatology—in particular, the belief in an imminent arrival of Christ and in a coming judgment—in 1 Thessalonians is not just confined to 4:13-5:11 and that all these statements must be considered together. Largely building on Selby's work, the most comprehensive treatment of the eschatology of

[78] Yet, even as a theological interpretation Paddison's work has weaknesses. Susannah Ticciati, review of *Theological Hermeneutics and 1 Thessalonians*, by Angus Paddison, *IJST* 10 (2008), 103-105, critiques: "shunning a historical reading, and placing the text in a much and varied wider conversation, he fails to engage with the particularity of the text in its structure and development. No cohesive *reading* emerges at all.... Instead we are given a bricolage of images and a series of reflections provoked by isolated phrases of the text" (105).

[79] Selby, "'Blameless at His Coming,'" 386.

[80] Ibid., 395.

1 Thessalonians was published in 2009 by David Luckensmeyer, his revised doctoral thesis *The Eschatology of First Thessalonians*.[81] He argues "that eschatology is *the* key for understanding Paul's pattern of exhortation in First Thessalonians."[82] What he means by this is that Paul uses eschatological discourse in 1 Thessalonians in order to help the audience understand why they are experiencing social conflict and to encourage them to live as members of a new community whose ultimate fate is to be with the Lord. After analysing the letter structure, Lukensmeyer gives a thorough historical-critical treatment of 1:9-10, 2:13-16, 4:13-18, and 5:1-11. Luckensmeyer's work is detailed and convincing, and thus much of the work in my thesis is informed by him, though with interpretive disagreements. My examination of eschatology in 1 and 2 Thessalonians is necessarily less detailed than Luckensmeyer's since my goal is not to explain how each passage fits into the author's "pattern of exhortation" within the letter structure but to compare the two eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

Eschatology in 2 Thessalonians

The most common topic in studies of 2 Thessalonians is whether or not the letter is Pauline. What repeatedly comes up in these studies is a focus on eschatology—either the eschatology is seen as incompatible with 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians must therefore be pseudonymous, or any differences are minimised to show the eschatology is compatible and so 2 Thessalonians can still be authentic. Yet, there is no comprehensive

[81] Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*.
[82] Ibid., 6.

treatment of eschatology in 2 Thessalonians that is comparable to Lukensmyer's excellent work on 1 Thessalonians. Instead, studies tend to focus on rhetorical analysis of the letter or on selective exegetical issues.

Though J. E. C. Schmidt had argued for the differing eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians in 1801, the majority of scholars continued to support the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians.[83] However, in 1903 Wilhelm Wrede demonstrated the literary dependence of 2 Thessalonians on 1 Thessalonians.[84] Wrede's work drastically changed the debate, and scholars increasingly accepted the pseudonymity of 2 Thessalonians. Notably, Wrede did not consider the different eschatologies to be a definitive proof against Pauline authorship. Despite the increasing number of scholars who accepted pseudonymity, it was not until Trilling's commentary in 1980 that 2 Thessalonians was actually interpreted in full as a pseudonymous letter.[85] In this commentary, Trilling builds on his earlier work on the literary dependence of 2 Thessalonians on 1 Thessalonians, which followed in Wrede's footsteps.[86] In Trilling's view, 2 Thessalonians is a response to a general situation of renewed apocalypticism, possibly in Asia Minor given the prevalence of apocalyptic thought in that region at the end of the first century.[87] The author attempts to dampen these eschatological expectations by sending 2 Thessalonians and so, according to Trilling,

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[83] J. E. C. Schmidt, "Vermutungen über die beiden Briefe an die Thessalonicher," in Wolfgang Trilling, *Untersuchungen zum zweiten Thessalonicherbrief*, ETS 27 (Leipzig: St Benno, 1972), 159-161.
[84] Wilhelm Wrede, *Die Echtheit der zweiten Thessalonicher-briefs untersucht*, TU 9/2 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1903).
[85] Trilling, *zweite Brief*. Though Charles Masson, *Les deux épitres de Saint Paul aux Thessaloniciens*, CNT 11a (Neuchatel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1957) argued for the pseudonymity of 2 Thessalonians, his interpretation of the epistle was not impacted by this argument. Trilling, on the other hand, made the first serious effort to interpret 2 Thessalonians as a deutero-Pauline letter.
[86] Trilling, *Untersuchungen zum zweiten Thessalonicherbrief*.
[87] Trilling, *zweite Brief*, 26-27.

this text belongs to a period of later New Testament history.[88] Like Trilling, Menken also wrote a commentary that solely treated 2 Thessalonians, in which he argues that there are indeed conflicts between the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians but that, on its own, this is not a strong enough point to require pseudonymity.[89] According to Menken, 2 Thessalonians was written by a pseudonymous author as a reinterpretation of 1 Thessalonians because some of his audience had understood 1 Thessalonians to support their belief that the day of the Lord had arrived.[90] The author thus understands his letter as compatible with the eschatology of 1 Thessalonians. In his conclusion, Menken briefly compares the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, showing that they are not nearly so different as previous commentators have claimed.[91] He argues that, though its strong interest in the future distinguishes 2 Thessalonians from Paul's letters, the author still clearly wants to encourage his audience's expectation of the *parousia*.[92] Therefore, in contrast to Trilling, Menken does not believe 2 Thessalonians is an attempt to dampen eschatological expectation.

Other treatments of 2 Thessalonians focus on its rhetoric, such as Glenn Holland's revised doctoral thesis, *The Tradition that You Received from Us*, which provides a rhetorical analysis of 2 Thessalonians.[93] After this analysis and a comparison of rhetoric in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, in which he demonstrates rhetorical tendencies that set 2 Thessalonians

[88] Ibid., 30-31.
[89] Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 29.
[90] Ibid., 43.
[91] Ibid., 146-147.
[92] Ibid., 148-149.
[93] Glenn S. Holland, *The Tradition that You Received from Us: 2 Thessalonians in the Pauline Tradition*, HUT 24 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988).

apart from 1 Thessalonians and the other undisputed Pauline letters, Holland examines the eschatology of 2 Thessalonians. Intriguingly, Holland argues that in Paul's writings, the day of the Lord cannot be equated with the *parousia*.[94] Instead, the day of the Lord precedes the *parousia* and is a day in which God pours out his wrath against the wicked.[95] The same is true of the author's use of these terms in 2 Thessalonians. Thus, the false claim "the day of the Lord has come" in 2 Thess 2:2 is not understood to mean that the *parousia* as well has come, but instead that some historical event identifiable as the Day of the Lord had come. As Holland argues,

> Therefore, the Day of the Lord, as far as those who preached its presence were concerned, was an 'historical' event rather than an 'a-historical' or 'mythic' one, that is, it represented an event in history which would demand some sort of human response. The parousia of Christ, on the other hand, is presented as an 'a-historical' or 'mythic' event, since it will require no human response; by the time of the parousia, all fates will have been decided, and no prophet will have to announce that it has arrived.[96]

Holland raises important questions about the relation of the *parousia* and the day of the Lord in Pauline literature, though his conclusions have been for the most part ignored, with scholars presuming that the day of the Lord and the *parousia* are indeed equivalent. As noted above, Barclay had also observed the different uses of *parousia* and the day of the Lord, though he concluded that Paul did not intend a temporal distinction between the two events in contrast to Holland who does believe Paul saw the two events as temporally separate. Holland's proposal deserves greater attention, and thus in my exegesis I will carefully consider the relationship of the day of the Lord and the *parousia* in both letters.

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[94] Ibid., 127.
[95] Ibid., 105.
[96] Ibid., 99.

The end of the 1980s proved to be a popular period for rhetorical analysis of 2 Thessalonians, for just a year after Holland's study, Frank Witt Hughes also published an extensive rhetorical analysis of 2 Thessalonians, arguing, as did Jewett, that the author uses deliberative rhetoric.[97] On the other hand, Hughes, in an earlier article, had argued that 1 Thessalonians uses epideictic rhetoric, again agreeing with Jewett.[98] It is interesting that two scholars who arrive at the same conclusion on rhetoric come to opposing decisions about authorship; this may suggest some limits on the value of rhetorical analysis. Though Hughes does not include an extensive treatment of eschatology in this letter, eschatology does play a significant role in his argument because he understands 2 Thessalonians as a polemical response to the "fulfilled eschatology" taught by other pseudonymous letters of Paul, such as Colossians and Ephesians.[99] For Hughes, the false teaching in 2 Thess 2:2 is that the day of the Lord, which is equivalent to the *parousia*, has come in fulness. The author of 2 Thessalonians responded to this realised eschatology with an apocalyptic, futuristic eschatology, which he believed was Paul's eschatological perspective. Hughes bases this reconstruction on his rhetorical analysis; however, as I. Howard Marshall notes, "It is not clear that rhetorical criticism as a method leads to this conclusion, since Jewett's very similar analysis of the letter goes along with an acceptance of its authenticity."[100]

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[97] Frank Witt Hughes, *Early Christian Rhetoric and 2 Thessalonians*, JSNTSup 30 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 73-74. Cf. Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 82. Jewett, in fact, references Hughes's dissertation, which is the basis of this monograph.

[98] F. W. Hughes, "The Rhetoric of 1 Thessalonians," in *Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. Collins, 94-116; Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 71-72.

[99] Hughes, *Early Christian Rhetoric*, 94-95.

[100] I. Howard Marshall, review of *Early Christian Rhetoric and 2 Thessalonians*, by Frank Witt Hughes, *JTS* 41 (1990): 196-197, 196.

Hughes also argues that there were multiple images of Paul put forward by the various pseudonymous authors writing in Paul's name and that these different portraits were in conflict with each other. Thus, for Hughes, rhetorical criticism is necessary for understanding the particular portrait the author of 2 Thessalonians presents.

As can be seen from this brief presentation of the secondary literature on 2 Thessalonians, the vast majority consider the eschatology of the letter to be a response of some sort to the eschatology of 1 Thessalonians—whether in an attempt to support 1 Thessalonians against misinterpretation or to correct it. Even among those who agree it is a pseudonymous letter, there is a wide range of opinion on whether 2 Thessalonians is theologically compatible with 1 Thessalonians. However, none of these treatments has produced an extensive comparison between the two eschatologies. This is one explanation for the divergent opinions on the compatibility of the eschatologies; a much more detailed comparison is required, and one whose results are not predetermined by authorship.

In conclusion, while eschatology is by no means an overlooked topic in Thessalonian scholarship, this literature review does demonstrate several gaps in the secondary literature. In the first place, the eschatology of 1 Thessalonians has repeatedly been examined on the presupposition of its authenticity, without any significant effort made to prove authorship given its almost unanimous status as a genuine Pauline letter. Additionally, while many of these treatments do produce comparisons of the two eschatologies, none of them have provided criteria for comparing an undisputed and disputed Pauline letter. There are still significant questions about the level of theological

compatibility necessary for two texts to be written by the same author and even whether or not we should expect Paul to be consistent in all his theology. Furthermore, rhetorical and sociological analyses have been the most common methods for examining these two letters, and while these studies have made important contributions to Thessalonian scholarship, the current impasse on the authorship and historical situation of 1 and 2 Thessalonians suggests that none of them have unlocked the key for interpretation. In this thesis I seek to address these gaps in the literature.

CHAPTER 1: THE ESCHATOLOGY OF 1 THESSALONIANS

In this chapter, I will conduct a close analysis of the eschatological sections of 1 Thessalonians. Terms such as *parousia*, ὀργή ("wrath"), and "day of the Lord" indicate the likelihood of eschatological material, and thus I include passages containing such terms in this examination. There are two large eschatological passages in 1 Thessalonians: 1 Thess 4:13-18 and 1 Thess 5:1-11, and these two sections usually receive the greatest attention in the secondary literature. However, there are also several smaller passages that must be examined to understand the eschatology of the letter: 1 Thess 1:9-10, 2:13-16, 2:19-20, 3:13, and 5:23-24. I will analyse each of these in the order they appear. After each passage has been carefully examined, the conclusion of the chapter will present an overview of the eschatology of 1 Thessalonians. The general consensus on the authorship and date of this letter is that it was written shortly after Paul's founding visit to Thessalonica, during his time in Corinth sometime in 50-51 CE.[1] Since I am leaving authorship to the side until the end of this study, there is little that can be said about the historical background, dating, or other contextual information at this point. We can, however, briefly discuss the audience's implied situation based on what is found in the text itself.

First Thessalonians seems to indicate a gentile audience. For example, in 1:9 one of the ways the implied audience's response to the gospel is described is that they "turned from idols to serve the true and living God." Since in Jewish thought idol worship was a

[1] Though see Douglas A. Campbell, *Framing Paul: An Epistolary Biography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), who argues for a date in the early 40s.

stereotypical gentile behaviour this is an apt description for the behaviour of gentiles who have given up their pagan idols in response to the gospel message. Furthermore, the moral exhortations in 4:1-8 deal with sexual immorality which, again according to Jewish stereotypes, was a particularly gentile issue. It is also clear from the letter that the audience is suffering in some way. In 1:6, it is said that they received the gospel "in spite of persecution," and 2:14 indicates the audience experienced some sort of conflict with their neighbours because of the gospel. The basis of Timothy's visit is to "strengthen and encourage" them "so that no one would be shaken by these trials" (3:3), which even if Timothy's visit is fictitious, this information points to an audience facing trials of some kind. The author gives thanks that they are continuing "to stand firm in the Lord" (3:8). Throughout, 1 Thessalonians provides encouragement and exhortation to bolster the audience's faith and ensure that they continue to stand firm.

1 THESSALONIANS 1:9-10

These two verses have often been understood as the "nutshell" of 1 Thessalonians,[2] with scholars taking them as either the substance of Paul's missionary preaching,[3] a summary of the response of the audience to Paul's missionary preaching,[4] or a foretaste of the topics

[2] As Adolf Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, ed. and trans. James Moffatt. 2nd rev. and enl. ed., vol. 1, Theological Translation Library 19 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1908), 89, remarks: "Here we have the mission-preaching to pagans in a nutshell."

[3] Martin Dibelius, *An die Thessalonicher I, II. An die Philipper*, 3rd ed., HNT 11 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1937), 6-7.

[4] See Masson, *Les Deux Épitres de Saint Paul aux Thessaloniciens*, 24: "Les v. 9 s ne contiennent pas un résumé de la predication missionnaire de l'apôtre Paul, mais caractérisent en quelques traits vigoureux l'attitude spirituelle nouvelle de ceux qui ont cru à cette predication."

that will be covered in the letter.[5] Whether they accurately summarise apostolic preaching to the community or not, the function within this letter is clear, as these two verses do effectively outline the main emphases in 1 Thessalonians: defence of Paul's ministry (2-3); proper behaviour, or what it looks like to serve the true God, (4:1-12); and Jesus's return (4:13-5:11). Thus, 1:9-10 raises themes that will occur repeatedly throughout the epistle.

In these verses, one eschatological element in particular stands out: future wrath. First Thessalonians indicates that there is a future event which will bring wrath and that believers are saved from such wrath. God is regularly the subject of ῥύομαι in Paul's letters (Rom 7:24-25—though here it is "through Jesus Christ"; 15:31; 2 Cor 1:9-10), although it is debated whether God or Jesus is ὁ ῥυόμενος ("the deliverer") in Rom 11:26.[6] On the other hand, in 1 Thess 1:10 Jesus clearly acts as the deliverer. This rescue happens when Jesus returns; the believers' current job is to wait until this moment. It is unclear what exactly

[5] See Johannes Munck, "1 Thess. I. 9-10 and the Missionary Preaching of Paul: Textual Exegesis and Hermeneutic Reflexions," *NTS* 9 (1963): 95-110; Morna D. Hooker, "1 Thessalonians 1.9-10: A Nutshell—but What Kind of Nut?" in *Geschichte—Tradition—Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichteberger, and Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck: 1996), 3:435-448.

[6] Otfried Hofius, "Das Evangelium und Israel. Erwägungen zu Römer 9-11: Ernst Käsemann zum 80," *ZTK* 83 (1986): 297-324, 318-320; Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 704; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, WBC 38B (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988), 682, argue that though in its original Isaianic context YHWH is the deliverer, Paul here refers to Jesus as the deliverer. In contrast, Krister Stendahl, *Final Account: Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 1995), 39-40; Mary Ann Getty, "Paul and the Salvation of Israel: A Perspective on Romans 9-11," *CBQ* 50 (1988): 456-469, 461; John G. Gager, *Reinventing Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 141-142, argue that ὁ ῥυόμενος refers to God in Rom 11:26. E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*, 194; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation, with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 619; J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul "In Concert" in the Letter to the Romans*, NovTSup 101 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 297; N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 2 vols. Christian Origins and the Question of God 4 (London: SPCK, 2013), 2:1251 all believe it does not refer to Jesus alone, but to both God and Jesus together.

this wrath is since there is no modifier, apart from "coming."[7] Ὀργή occurs two other times in 1 Thessalonians: 2:16 and 5:9. These instances also lack a modifier, though in 5:9 God does seem to be in control of the wrath by choosing who does and does not experience it. Paul uses ὀργή twelve times in Romans and nowhere else in his (undisputed) letters.[8] Most of these occurrences have an eschatological aspect. For example, in Rom 2:5 Paul warns that ὀργή is being stored up in the "day of wrath" (ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς), when the righteous judgment of God is revealed. In Rom 5:9 Paul explains that because Christ died, "we will be saved through him from wrath" (νῦν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ σωθησόμεθα δι᾽ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς). It is ambiguous in Rom 5:9 whether the wrath is God's or Christ's, but it is clear that it is divine wrath. Furthermore, the prophetic idea of the "day of YHWH," which is often described as the "day of wrath" (e.g. Zeph 1:18: ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς κυρίου; "on the day of the Lord's wrath"), matches with the eschatological understanding in these passages.[9] The "day of wrath" in the prophets is the time when God acts against those who are opposed to him, destroying them. Likewise, the use of ὀργή in 1 Thess 1:10 indicates God's eschatological action against the wicked, from which believers are rescued.

The phrase "to wait for his Son from the heavens" describes the same event as the *parousia* of the Lord, which will be discussed below in relation to 4:13-18. As in 4:13-18, here the Lord comes down from heaven to his people, who have been waiting for him.[10] First

[7] See the Excursus: "The Wrath of God" following the next section.
[8] Rom 1:18; 2:5 [2x], 8; 3:5; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22 [2x]; 12:19; 13:4, 5. Cf. Col 3:6, 8; Eph 2:3; 4:31; 5:6; 1 Tim 2:8.
[9] Cf. Zeph 2:3; Isa 13:13. See also Lam 1:12; 2:1; 2:21, 22.
[10] In the three other places where Paul uses the phrase ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, the noun is singular (1 Cor 15:47, 2 Cor 5:2, and Gal 1:8; cf. 1 Thess 4:16). This verse may incorporate traditional language that used the plural form, or it could imply multiple levels of heaven, as seems to be the case in 2 Cor 12:2. However, 1 Thessalonians does not further specify. In any case, it does not affect interpretation.

Thessalonians presents this *parousia*-expectation as a key component of the audience's faith. The verb used, ἀναμένω, does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, and Paul generally uses the verb ἀπεδέχομαι in similar contexts.[11] Ἀναμένω does appear in similar contexts of waiting on God's salvation or justice in the Greek Jewish scriptures such as Jdt 8:17 and Isa 59:11 (though here those waiting are disappointed). In 1 Thessalonians, this expectation for the future rescue is grounded in an event that has already occurred—Jesus's resurrection.[12] In this introduction, 1 Thessalonians makes it clear that salvation is equated with rescue from God's wrath (cf. 5:9). For the audience, along with all believers, this rescue, though occurring in the future, is assured. Furthermore, Jesus is the one presented as the agent of this rescue.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13-16

While it is not immediately clear that these verses contain eschatological material, this section again deals with the topic of wrath, and so it is necessary to determine whether or not it contributes to a picture of the letter's eschatology. It is one of the most heavily debated sections of 1 Thessalonians and is often considered a later insertion.[13] Many

[11] Rom 8:19, 23, 25; 1 Cor 1:7; Gal 5:5; Phil 3:20.

[12] See Hooker, "1 Thessalonians 1.9-10," 438.

[13] Two of the most influential arguments in this debate have been Birger A. Pearson, "1 Thessalonians 2:13-16: A Deutero-Pauline Interpolation," *HTR* 64 (1971): 79-94 and Markus Bockmuehl, "1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 and the Church in Jerusalem," *TynBul* 52 (2001): 1-31. Pearson reaffirms this position in Birger A. Pearson, *The Emergence of the Christian Religion* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 58-74. See Carol J. Schlueter, *Filling up the Measure: Polemical Hyperbole in 1 Thessalonians 2.14-16*, JSNTSup 98 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 13-38; Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 161-167; Boring, *Thessalonians*, 91-108 for recent discussion of the various arguments for and against interpolation of these verses. Scholars variously disagree about whether or not 2:13 is part of the proposed interpolation.

scholars who hold 1 Thessalonians to be authentic argue that this passage would have been impossible for Paul to compose.[14] This of course is related to whether or not Paul is the author of the whole letter, and indeed this passage is one of the main reasons first F. C. Baur and more recently Marlene Crüsemann have rejected the authenticity of 1 Thessalonians.[15] Notably, neither raise objections to the integrity of these verses within the letter, which suggests that their main issue is theological. Indeed, the most common objections to these verses are theological in nature. It is noted that this is the only place in Paul's letters where he claims the Jews killed Jesus and where he describes his fellow Jews as "enemies of all humanity."[16] Likewise, it is argued that the sentiment that the Jews "fill up their sins always" (2:16) is contrary to what Paul has to say about his fellow Jews in passages like Rom 9:1-5, 10:1-4, 11:25-32.[17] For those who believe Paul did write 1 Thessalonians, the argument for interpolation goes: Paul would not have condemned his fellow Jews in such a vitriolic manner. However, such theological objections require one to assume Paul is consistent across his letters, without acknowledging the contingent nature of Paul's thoroughly occasional letters or the possibility of development in his thought, an assumption that cannot be made lightly, if at all—especially in light of Räisänen's

[14] Pearson, "1 Thessalonians 2:13-16"; Helmut Koester, "1 Thessalonians: Experiment in Christian Writing," in *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History: Essays Presented to George Huntston Williams on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, ed. F. Forrester Church and Timothy George, Studies in the History of Christian Thought 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 33-44, 38; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 119-127.

[15] Baur, *Paul the Apostle*, 2:86-88, 2:320; Marlene Crüsemann, *The Pseudepigraphal Letters to the Thessalonians*, translated by Linda Maloney (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 21-73.

[16] Pearson, "1 Thessalonians 2:13-16," 85: "I find it virtually impossible to ascribe to Paul the *ad hominem* fragment of Gentile anti-Judaism in v. 15."

[17] Pearson, "1 Thessalonians 2:13-16," 85-86.

arguments for Paul's inconsistency.[18] Furthermore, once it is recognised that this passage is about specific Jews who prevent the gospel from going out, it becomes clear that it does not condemn all Jews and is not describing them as a whole ethnic group as enemies of humanity.[19] The intentional contrast between 1:6-8 and 2:15-16 must be taken into account. There are two different responses to the message of the gospel: the audience's acceptance and further proclamation of it, and certain Jews' rejection of it, leading them to prevent any further proclamation. Both of these responses are connected with a following statement of wrath—those who accept and proclaim the gospel will be rescued from wrath, those who prevent it and persecute its messengers experience wrath. Of course, if Paul did not write 1 Thessalonians, the theological argument disappears, and we must instead evaluate the historical, form-critical, and syntactical arguments.

There are two main historical arguments made for the interpolation of 2:14-16; while these cannot be fully assessed without deciding who the author is, we can at least make some general observations. In the first place, assuming that ἔφθασεν in 2:16c refers to

[18] Cf. Schlueter, *Filling Up the Measure*, 62. For Paul's letters as contingent and coherent, see J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 23-36. For Paul's inconsistency, see Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law,* 2nd rev. and enl. ed., WUNT 29 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987). Issues of consistency, coherence, and contingency in Paul's letters will be explored in chapter 3.

[19] Contra Richard, *Thessalonians*, 125-126; Crüsemann, *Pseudepigraphal Letters*, 68; So, rightly, Frank D. Gilliard, "The Problem of the Antisemitic Comma between 1 Thessalonians 2.14 and 15," *NTS* 35 (1989): 481-502; Holtz, *Thessalonicher*, 111; idem. "The Judgment on the Jews and the Salvation of all Israel: 1 Thes 2,15-16 and Rom 11,25-26," in *Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. Collins, 284-294: "the verdict Paul passes in 1 Thes 2,15-16 does not address a group determined by biological descent and common history, but a group of people who in their present time, as in their past, act out of a special behaviour resisting God's salvific acts and, by this, humankind as well" (284). Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica*, 42, helpfully notes, "That Paul was not referring in 2.15-16 to Jews in general is supported by the fact the churches in Judea which he praises in 2.14 were comprised primarily, if not exclusively, of Jews."

the past (more on that below), Pearson argues that there is no historical event that would have suggested divine wrath against the Jews except for the destruction of the temple in 70 CE, and so this verse must be talking about that event.[20] If Paul did not write 1 Thessalonians, then this may well be the event to which the author refers in these verses. However, Pearson's argument is purely retrospective for, as Jewett aptly argues, "From the perspective of those who know about the Jewish-Roman War, it is surely the most appropriate choice. But to someone who lived before that catastrophe … other events could easily have appeared to be a final form of divine wrath."[21] Thus, it is not necessary that 2:16 refer to the events of 70 CE. Indeed, Bockmuehl has demonstrated that there were several events in 48-49 CE, such as the stampede during Passover on the Temple mount during Ventidius Cumanus's time as procurator or the intermittent famines throughout 44-49, which could have been interpreted as God's wrath coming down.[22] Alternatively, we may just not know what sort of event had been interpreted as a sign of God's wrath. Pearson's second objection is that there is no record of the persecution of the Judean Christ-followers by Jews after 44 CE and before the Jewish War, which, he believes, makes it impossible for Paul to have pointed to the Judean churches as an example of perseverance in opposition.[23] In the first place, this assumes that there would be extant records of any sort of opposition—even relatively minor—that could be interpreted by the early Christ-followers as persecution. Secondly, Bockmuehl has drawn attention to a sixth

[20] Pearson, "1 Thessalonians 2:13-16," 82-83.
[21] Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 37.
[22] Bockmuehl, "1 Thessalonians 2:14-16," 25.
[23] Pearson, "1 Thessalonians 2:13-16," 87.

century description by Malalas of Antioch describing increased Jewish persecution against Jerusalem believers in 48/49; this is not incontrovertible evidence but it certainly does suggest the possibility of a recent experience of persecution to which 1 Thessalonians could be referring in 2:14.[24] Or, the reference could be to a general atmosphere of hostility to Judean believers, involving social ostracism and harassment rather than formal persecution. If Paul did not write 2:13-16 (or the whole of 1 Thessalonians), then the events around 70 CE make good sense of this text; however, there is no real historical objection to the authenticity of this section.

In addition to theological and historical concerns, another standard argument for interpolation is that 2:13-16 interrupts the flow of the text with an anomalous second thanksgiving, meaning these verses could easily be omitted to provide a smooth flow from 2:11-12 to 2:17.[25] Yet, the Pauline letters, undisputed or disputed, do not have a uniform structure—Galatians, for example, does not have a thanksgiving section at all. Furthermore, if one assumes that 2 Thessalonians copied 1 Thessalonians, then this interpolation would need to have taken place at a relatively early stage since 2 Thessalonians also contains two thanksgivings. It is true that the structure of 2:13-16 closely resembles 1:2-10; however, that evidence can easily be read to support either side and so does not add to the debate. There are also linguistic arguments for interpolation, but there is not space to deal with these in depth. In short, Daryl Schmidt, assuming Pauline

[24] Bockmuehl, "1 Thessalonians 2:14-16," 22-24.
[25] Pearson, "1 Thessalonians 2:13-16," 89-90; Hendrikus Boers, "The Form Critical Study of Paul's Letters. 1 Thessalonians as a Case Study," *NTS* 22 (1976): 140-158, 151-152. In contrast, Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 38 argues that the transition is "smooth and logical." Cf. Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 32.

authorship for the rest of the letter, argues that these verses contain several syntactical structures that Paul does not use elsewhere, indicating interpolation.[26] For example, Schmidt argues, Paul does not use καὶ διὰ τοῦτο, which appears in 2:13, anywhere else in his undisputed letters; however, he does note 2 Thess 2:11 imitates it.[27] Yet, though Paul normally uses διὰ τοῦτο asyndetically, he does use διὰ τοῦτο γάρ in Rom 13:6. Furthermore, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο only occurs once each in Matthew (14:2), Mark (6:14), Luke (14:20), John (5:16), and Hebrews (9:15), though none of these are regarded as interpolations. Additionally, as Luckensmeyer critiques, Schmidt must assume that "Paul's vocabulary and style are sufficiently known and distinctive so as to make apparent those texts which are written by him and those texts which are written by another.... Yet, it is difficult to establish a norm for Paul's letters by which they may be measured."[28] In summary, neither form-critical nor linguistic arguments provide evidence for the interpolation of this passage.

Additionally, there is almost no manuscript evidence to suggest a later addition, apart from one eleventh century Latin manuscript (Vatic. Lat. 5729) that omits verse 16d.[29] Given the late date of this manuscript, this omission is probably the result of a copyist's rejection of this verse on theological grounds, though this cannot be proven with certainty. It could, instead, reflect a particular recension of Latin manuscripts that preserved this

[26] Daryl Schmidt, "I Thess. 2.13-16: Linguistic Evidence for an Interpolation," *JBL* 102 (1983): 268-279; idem., "The Syntactical Style of 2 Thessalonians: How Pauline Is It?" in *Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. Collins, 383-393. Schmidt's first article has been refuted by Jon A. Weatherly, "The Authenticity of 1 Thessalonians 2.13-16: Additional Evidence," *JSNT* 42 (1991): 79-98.
[27] Schmidt, "I Thess. 2.13-16," 274.
[28] Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 164.
[29] As Luckensmeyer observes, scholars have continuously overlooked this manuscript evidence. Thus, it cannot be said, as so many do, that "there is no manuscript evidence" (ibid., 162).

reading from a Greek manuscript, though given that "the witness is exceptionally isolated it is unlikely that the trajectory of this decision goes back to a Greek manuscript."[30] Still, most of the problematic elements are retained even with this minor exclusion. Without clear manuscript evidence, it is difficult to make the argument for interpolation if a better explanation can be found. The best option is that the text is original. The concern here is for the suffering audience, who are most likely facing some sort of persecution from their fellow (nonbelieving) countrymen. First Thessalonians builds up their faith by linking them with the churches in Judea who also suffered persecution from their fellow Judeans. Furthermore, 1 Thessalonians implies that the audience's enemies will suffer the same fate as he here describes for the Jews who persecuted the church: the wrath of God will come upon them.

The precise meaning of the statement ἔφθασεν δὲ ἐπ᾽ αὐτοὺς ἡ ὀργὴ εἰς τέλος is heavily debated. Though the same verb φθάνω appears in 4:17—with a different meaning—here φθάνω is translated as "come/arrive." This is a common meaning for φθάνω in the New Testament in particular, but there is disagreement over how to interpret the aorist here.[31] While the aorist has a large range of uses, there are generally two interpretations offered for 2:16. The first option is to regard ἔφθασεν as referring to an event that has already happened, such as the expulsion of the Jews from Rome[32] or the Passover stampede on the

[30] Ibid.

[31] LSJ, s.v. "φθάνω, II.2." Cf. Plutarch, *Alex. fort.* 2.5.

[32] So Ernst Bammel, "Judenverfolgung und Naherwartung: Zur Eschatologie des Ersten Thessalonicherbriefs," *ZTK* (1959): 294-315, 295, 306 and Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 148. Robert Jewett, "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation," *NTS* 17 (1971), 205n5, thinks the event is a massacre in Jerusalem in 49 CE.

Temple mount.[33] The alternative is to take it as proleptic, as a prophetic statement about a future event that is sure to happen.[34] On the one hand, there are several cases in the New Testament where a verb in the aorist indicative refers to the certainty or imminence of an event that has not yet occurred (Mark 11:24, Jude 14, Rev 10:7). On the other hand, elsewhere in the New Testament this same verb appears in the aorist indicative to describe something that has come, or at least has already started the process. For example, in Matt 12:28: "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you [ἔφθασεν ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς]" (cf. Luke 11:20). In this verse, the kingdom of God is shown to have already come upon these particular people by the expulsion of demons, though it may just be a foretaste of the future kingdom. In Rom 9:31 there is no reference to the future: "but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not arrive [οὐκ ἔφθασεν] at that law."[35] Furthermore, in the Greek Jewish scriptures, ἔφθασεν always refers to a past occurrence.[36] Though the two other occurrences of ὀργή in 1 Thessalonians refer to eschatological wrath (1:10; 5:9), given the use of ἔφθασεν elsewhere in Greek literature as well as the focus on a particular group of Jews here, it is best to take the verb as referring to an event that has occurred "at last," which displays the wrath of God against these people.[37]

As noted above, Pearson, "1 Thessalonians 2:13-16," 82-84, argues the event can only be the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, thus supporting his interpolation theory.

[33] Bockmuehl, "1 Thessalonians 2:14-16," 25.

[34] Dibelius, *Thessalonicher*, 13; Ernst von Dobschütz, *Die Thessalonicher-Briefe*, 7th ed., KEK 10 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1909), 116; James Everett Frame, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912), 114; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 177; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 95-96; Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, 452; Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 152-161.

[35] Likewise, 2 Cor 10:14 and Phil 3:16 both refer to something that has already happened.

[36] Jdg 20:42; 2 Kgdms 20:13; 3 Kgdms 12:18; Ezr 3:1; Neh 7:73; Dan 4:11, 20, 22, 24, 28; 7:13, 22.

[37] Though εἰς τέλος can be either temporal ("at last" or "in the end") or intensive ("in full," "completely"), the parallel with πάντοτε in the previous verse suggests it should be read

As discussed above, what often goes unobserved is that these verses serve as a counterexample to the audience's behaviour. While wrath has come upon specific Jews who prevented the gospel from advancing, the audience will be rescued from wrath because they believed the gospel and spread it throughout the surrounding area. Their response indicates their fate. This passage serves as a foreshadowing of the eschatological wrath that will overtake all who are opposed to God (5:3). It thus assures the audience that even though they are suffering, just as indeed the Judean churches have, God's wrath will eventually come.

EXCURSUS: The Wrath of God

As noted above, ὀργή ("wrath") is an important aspect of the eschatology of 1 Thessalonians. While it is evident that wrath has eschatological import in 1 Thessalonians (even in 2:16), it is still unclear precisely what the wrath *is*. In early Greek literature, the term ὀργή designates the "natural impulse" or "temperament."[38] It comes to mean anger or passion, becoming interchangeable with θυμός, though ὀργή often takes on more violent connotations, being linked with acts of vengeance.[39] Ὀργή is first used for divine wrath in tragedy.[40] In these texts, events are interpreted as caused by a god's or goddess's anger against a particular person. In the Roman world, *ira deum* signifies similar ideas about

temporally. Furthermore, since this wrath is related to a past event, "at last" is the correct interpretation. Contra BDF §207.3, which suggests "in full."

[38] LSJ, s.v. "ὀργή." The first appearance is in Hesiod, *Op*. 304. Homer never uses the term, always preferring θυμός.

[39] BDAG, s.v. "ὀργή"; Hermann Kleinknecht, "ὀργή," *TDNT* 5:383-392. See Plato, *Leg.* 9.867b (Bury, LCL), where θυμός is "passion" and ὀργή is "rage."

[40] See Aeschylus, *Prom.* 190; Euripides, *Hipp.* 438.

divine wrath, though there is a greater emphasis on its role behind events such a famine, disease, and war.[41]

In the Greek Jewish scriptures, θυμός and ὀργή are used interchangeably to describe strong human emotion as well as God's response to evil and are sometimes used together for intensification (2 Chr 28:11; Isa 7:4; Jer 37:24). Ὀργή often describes God's response to the rebellion and sin of the Israelites (Exod 32:10; Num 11:1, 33; 4 Kgdms 23:26; Amos 2:6; Zech 7:12) and also to the nations who have rebelled against him (Exod 15:7; Ps 2:1-6; Amos 1:2-2:5; Jer 50:13). God's wrath is portrayed as destructive (Exod 32:10; Isa 10:25; Job 4:9); this is especially apparent in passages about the day of the Lord/the day of wrath (Zeph 1:15, 18; Isa 13:9). God's wrath is sometimes presented as something that can be appeased or turned away, usually by repentance or supplication (2 Chr 12:12; 32:26; Hos 14:4; Dan 9:16). In general, ὀργή is brought by God upon those who oppose him.

In the New Testament, θυμός is generally used for humans (2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:20; Eph 4:31; Col 3:8), while ὀργή typically is reserved for God or Jesus (Mark 3:5; John 3:36; Rom 1:8; 2:5; 12:19; Heb 3:11; 4:3; Rev 6:16; 14:10; 16:19; 19:15). However, ὀργή is occasionally used of humans as well (Rom 2:8; Col 3:8; Eph 4:31; 1 Tim 2:8; Jas 1:19, 20).[42] In these instances, ὀργή is consistently found to be inappropriate for humans; they are to get rid of ὀργή (Eph 4:31; Col 3:8; 1 Tim 2:8; Jas 1:20). Throughout Revelation ὀργή is often intensified with θυμός, as happens in the Greek Jewish scriptures as well. Interestingly, in the undisputed Pauline letters ὀργή only appears in 1 Thessalonians and Romans. In Romans,

[41] Kleinknecht, *TDNT* 5:389-392. See Livy, *Hist. Rome*, 4.9.3 (*deum iras*); Tacitus, *Hist.*, 2.38 (*deum ira*); 4.54 (*caelestis irae*); *Ann*. 4.1 (*deum ira*); 16.16 (*ira numinum*).
[42] Both θυμός and ὀργή appear in Col 3:8 and Eph 4:31.

ὀργή is modified by θεοῦ ("of God") once (Rom 1:18), though often "of God" is implied without the modifier (Rom 5:9; 9:22; 12:19). Paul can speak of ὀργή as a present occurrence (Rom 1:8), while in other places he refers to a future event (Rom 2:5, 5:9). In the disputed Pauline letters, ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ ("the wrath of God") is said to come because of certain prohibited behaviours (Col 3:6; Eph 5:6). In both the Greek Jewish scriptures and the New Testament, the most common use of ὀργή is to describe God's response to human wickedness. Throughout 1 Thessalonians, ὀργή belongs to God as well.

In the Pauline corpus ὀργή can refer to either present or future wrath. This is consistent with the portrayal of wrath in the Greek Jewish scriptures, in which ὀργή describes both God's current actions against sin as well as his future response in the day of the Lord. As in the Jewish scriptures, in 1 Thessalonians as well wrath is God's response to unholiness and rejection of him, in both the present and the future. For this reason, the believers are to be found blameless in holiness so that they can be in the presence of Jesus at the *parousia*. As indicated by 5:3, wrath can be understood in 1 Thessalonians as destruction, for the day of the Lord comes to nonbelievers as a day of wrath. It is the day when "sudden destruction comes upon them." Again, this is consistent with the description of ὀργή throughout the Greek Jewish scriptures. Those who are opposed to the Lord will be destroyed. Wrath is thus the opposite of salvation (cf. 1 Thess 5:9). Those who are not elected to possess salvation will suffer wrath. Some of those who oppose the gospel have already been overcome by wrath (2:16), while those who believe and turn to God will be rescued (1:9-10). In this eschatological sense, ὀργή is God's ultimate response. Thus, in

1 Thessalonians wrath occurs at the end, on the day of the Lord, and is the destruction of those who are opposed to God.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:19-20

These verses act as a justification and defence of Paul's and his fellow missionaries' ministry among the Thessalonians. The tradition we have in Acts 17, however embellished, points to a difficult situation in Paul's visit to Thessalonica, likely involving a hasty departure. The immediately preceding verses seek to assure the audience of Paul's care for his community, speaking of Paul's great desire to be present with the Thessalonians, asserting that his absence was not wilful but rather he was prevented by Satan (2:18). In order to support these assertions, 1 Thessalonians provides two proofs in 2:19-20. The first proof, in 2:19, consists of a rhetorical question within a question. The question anticipates a positive response, which is then clearly expressed as a second proof in 2:20. By these two proofs 1 Thessalonians seeks to assure the audience of the effectiveness of Paul's ministry in Thessalonica—the Thessalonians themselves will be a witness to Jesus at the *parousia*. Interestingly, here it says the testimony will be before Jesus rather than God, while in 3:13 the judiciary element takes place before God *at* Jesus's *parousia*.

First Thessalonians 2:19-20 is certain that Paul will be able to boast in the Thessalonians at Jesus's *parousia*, that they will provide evidence that his ministry was not in vain in that city.[43] This is the first occurrence of the term *parousia* in 1 Thessalonians,

[43] Paul has a similar attitude of boasting with his other churches (1 Cor 9:1-2; 2 Cor 1:14; 7:4; Phil 2:16; 4:1).

though the same idea of Jesus's appearing has already occurred in 1:9-10.[44] Just as in 1:10, here also believers are shown to escape wrath and enjoy Jesus's presence. As Foster highlights, "being in the presence of the Lord at the parousia (1 Thess 2:19) and the wrath (1 Thess 2:16) form a matched pair of opposed binary eschatological fates."[45] This verse gives just a tentative hint of the *parousia*; the rest of the letter will fill in more of the details.

1 THESSALONIANS 3:13

This verse occurs in the prayer-wish of 3:11-13. The articular infinitive here provides the result of 3:12: The author wishes that the Lord may increase the audience's love for each other *so that* their hearts are blameless in ἁγιωσύνη ("holiness"). Apparent here is the desire for the believers to be regarded as holy at the *parousia*, presumably because that is a necessary state for being in God's presence. Holiness is a concern throughout 1 Thessalonians. Just before the eschatological discussion in 4:13-5:11, in 4:3 we read that God's will for the Thessalonians is their ἁγιασμός ("sanctification"), the process that leads to the state of ἁγιωσύνη ("holiness").[46] While here it is hoped that they will be found in a state of holiness at the moment of the *parousia*, chapter 4 lays out what the process of

[44] See discussion of *parousia* below.

[45] Foster, "Eschatology of the Thessalonian Correspondence," 62.

[46] See Schmidt, *Heilig ins Eschaton*, for an extensive treatment of these two terms in 1 Thessalonians. He distinguishes between holiness and sanctification in 1 Thessalonians, drawing out the eschatological implications: "Heilig*keit* ist Begriff göttlich-eschatologischer Vollendung, eine Qualität, die nur dem göttlichen Raum zukommt," whereas "Heili*gung* hingegen bezeichnet den wartenden Weg der Gläubigen bis zur eschatologischen Vollendung, markiert auf der einen Seite durch ihre Bekehrung zu Gott … und auf der anderen durch die bald erwartete Parusie Christi, im Anschluss daran ewige Gemeinschaft mit dem Kyrios erwartet wird" (395).

becoming holy looks like in the audience's lives.[47] Thus, 3:13 can be seen as pointing forward to the discussion in 4:1-12, but also anticipating 4:13-18. Additionally, it reaffirms the call in 2:12 "to walk worthily of God who calls you into his kingdom and glory."

There are two[48] main interpretations for who the "holy ones" are in this verse: 1) angels[49] and 2) "saints," i.e. believers.[50] The strongest argument for the first interpretation is the likely quotation of Zech 14:5 (OG: ἥξει κύριος ὁ θεός μου καὶ πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ), in which "angels" is the correct referent for οἱ ἅγιοι. Additionally, in eschatological sayings in the Synoptic Gospels, also showing influence from Zech 14:5, the writers use similar phrasing to describe the Son of Man's return with his angels (Matt 16:27: μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ, "with his angels"; Matt 25:31: πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ, "all the angels with him"; Mark 8:38: μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων, "with the holy angels"). On the other hand, there are a number of objections to this interpretation. In the first place, when Paul uses ἅγιοι substantively in his letters he always means "saints" (Rom 8:27; 12:13; 15:26; 16:2; 1 Cor 6:1; 14:33; 2 Cor 9:12; Phil 4:21; Phlm 1:7); he never once uses ἅγιοι to mean "angels." The disputed

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[47] Cf. Maren Bohlen, *Sanctorum Communio: Die Christen als ‚Heilige' bei Paulus*, BZNW 183 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 139.

[48] There is a third option: both angels and believers. So George Milligan, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (London: Macmillan, 1908), 45; Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians: The English Text, with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 115; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 30. However, this option usually bypasses the difficulty of this verse, which needs to be dealt with.

[49] Dibelius, *Thessalonicher*, 19; Dobschütz, *Thessalonicher-Briefe*, 152-153; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 145; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 214; Ben Witherington III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 104; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 177-178; Fee, *Thessalonians*, 134-136; Ernest Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Thessalonians*, BNTC (London: Black, 1972), 152-153; Légasse, *Thessaloniciens*, 197-198; I. Howard Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Commentary*, NCBC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983; repr., Vancouver, Regent College Publishing, 2002), 102-103.

[50] Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, 492; Boring, *Thessalonians*, 127-131.

Pauline letters likewise use ἅγιοι to mean "saints" (Eph 1:1, 18; 2:19; 3:8, 18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18; Col 1:2, 12, 26; 1 Tim 5:19). Additionally, the Greek Jewish scriptures sometimes use ἅγιοι substantively to refer to the people of God.[51] For example, in Dan 7:21, it is said that "the horn was waging war with the saints [τοὺς ἁγίους] and overpowering them." One problem with this second interpretation is that it would seem to be inconsistent with the picture in 1 Thess 4, where believers are lifted up to meet the Lord after he has come. However, there is no verb in the final clause of 3:13, and so the verse does not state that Jesus *comes* with his holy ones. *Parousia* does just mean "presence." Thus, it could just be read that all the saints are in the presence of the Lord.

This is a difficult interpretive issue, and the arguments on both sides are strong; however, the best explanation is that ἅγιοι refers to angels here. While ἅγιοι never means angels in any other Pauline letters, the quotation of Zech 14:5 best explains its use in this verse. The phrasing "with his/the angels" in eschatological passages in the gospels also parallels the use here, which fits well with the other parallels between 1 Thessalonians and the Synoptic Gospels. Finally, the other occurrences of *parousia* in 1 Thessalonians refer to Jesus's coming down from heaven, rather than his general presence. Thus, the image is of Jesus coming down with his angels; the significance of the use of Zech 14:5 here should not be overlooked, for "it involves a clear referential shift of κύριος from God to Jesus."[52] The day of the Lord from Zech 12-14 is now shown to be the *parousia* of Jesus. Though, significantly,

[51] Num 16:5; Ps 15:3; 33:10; Dan 7:8, 18, 21, 22, 25, 27; Wis 5:5; 18:9.
[52] L. Joseph Kreitzer, *Jesus and God in Paul's Eschatology*, JSNTSup 19 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 118.

God is clearly involved in 3:13 as well, for it is before him that believers will stand on that day.[53]

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

Following a section of paraenetic teaching, the author[54] transitions to a new topic in 4:13-18.[55] This transition is signified by the formula, οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν ("we do not wish for you to be ignorant/uninformed"). This same phrase appears in other Pauline letters either to introduce previously unknown information (Rom 1:13; 11:25; 2 Cor 1:8) or to give a new interpretation of known information (1 Cor 10:1; 12:1). In this case as well 1 Thess 4:13 either introduces new information or a new interpretation to the community.[56] This is apparent when 4:13 is contrasted with 4:9, which discusses φιλαδελφίας ("brotherly love"), of which there is no need to write to the audience since they already know all about

[53] So Kreitzer, *Jesus and God*, 110, "Here we see, quite simply, how God and Christ are co-operative in Paul's description of the Parousia and Final Judgment."

[54] You Tae Kim, "Literary Composition and Theology of First Thessalonians 4 and 5" (PhD diss., Drew University, 2004) argues, assuming Pauline authorship for the rest of the letter, that 1 Thess 4:13-18 is an interpolation by a later editor. However, all of Kim's objections are easily defeated. In particular, Kim ignores the likelihood that—if Paul is the author—he was likely influenced by traditional creeds and formulas, which would explain the unPauline vocabulary, particularly in 4:14. Kim seems to think that any unPauline sentence is best explained as an interpolation rather than recognising how different some topics in 1 Thessalonians are compared with other Pauline epistles. On the other hand, if the author is not Paul, there is no reason to see this section as separated from the rest of the letter.

[55] See Best, *Thessalonians*, 184-185; Morris, *Thessalonians*, 135; Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 71; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 20-22; Fee, *Thessalonians*, 164; Candida R. Moss and Joel S. Baden, "1 Thessalonians 4.13-18 in Rabbinic Perspective," *NTS* 58 (2012): 199-212, 201. Contra Dobschütz, *Thessalonicher-Briefe*, 186; Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, 239, 526-527; Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 212-213; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 233; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 262.

[56] See Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 21; Foster, "Eschatology of the Thessalonian Correspondence," 63-64.

it and practice it. Additionally, 4:13 can be contrasted with 5:1-2, where the audience is said to already "accurately know" the information. In the current section, the audience did not have some particular knowledge about τῶν κοιμωμένων, "those who have fallen asleep," signifying believers who have died.[57] Paul uses this verb in the same way in other passages (1 Cor 7:39; 15:6, 18, 20, 51), and sleep is a common euphemism for death in Jewish and Christian texts, as well as throughout the ancient Mediterranean world (e.g., Gen 47:30; 1 Kgs 2:10; Isa 43:17; Acts 7:60; 2 Pet 3:4; cf. Cicero, *Sen.* 81; Catullus, *Carmina* 5.5-6). Furthermore, there is a connection in Jewish literature between sleep and resurrection, as is also present in the current passage (Dan 12:2; T. Jud. 25.4; T. Iss. 7:9; 2 Macc 12:44-45; 1 En. 91:10, 92:3; cf. 1 Cor 15:20-21). The content of this section is the future events that are to unfold, with a focus on the fate of believers who have died.

Rationale for the Passage

The reason given for introducing this topic is: ἵνα μὴ λυπῆσθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα. The audience needs to be informed about the topic *so that* they do not grieve "like those who do not have hope," in other words, nonbelievers.[58] Though some would argue

[57] See Paul Hoffman, *Die Toten in Christus: Eine religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Untersuchung zur paulinischen Eschatologie*, NTAbh 2 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1966), 186-206 for a survey of κοιμᾶσθαι and καθεύδειν as euphemisms for death in the ancient world.

[58] In contrast to Richard S. Ascough, "A Question of Death: Paul's Community-Building Language in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18," *JBL* 123 (2004): 509-530, who argues, "The category of those without hope does not include all pagans. Many persons in antiquity did hold out hope for an afterlife for the dead, a hope that was expressed in their funerary practice" (524). However, throughout this letter "hope" is related to belief in the true God, which would imply that those who do not have hope are those who do not believe in God and so cannot have the security of "living with him forever" (1 Thess 5:11), which is the goal of the Christ-follower's life. Dibelius, *Thessalonicher*, 24, argues, "die griechische Hoffnung auf Unsterblichkeit der körperfreien Seele keine ἐλπίς im paulinischen Sinn, vgl. zu I Cor 15_{12}."

that this prohibition is aimed at a hypothetical future situation—in which the audience may be tempted to grieve—the present subjunctive implies that the audience is currently grieving without hope and the author wants them to stop this behaviour.[59] However, there is debate about whether this is an absolute prohibition on grieving or if it is an encouragement to grieve a certain way: *with hope* in contrast to the hopeless nonbelievers. Barclay argues that Paul wants them to stop grieving completely, noting the strong contrasts throughout the letter between those outside the community and those within.[60] He argues that just as the audience is not to worship idols or to engage in sexual immorality like the outsiders, so they are not to grieve like them. It is not a degree of grief he prohibits, but grief itself in the particular context of the death of believers. In other Pauline letters, λύπη/λυπέω is never prohibited outright;[61] in fact, in Phil 2:27 Paul is thankful to have avoided the "sorrow upon sorrow" he would inevitably have felt had Epaphroditus died. Furthermore, in 2 Cor 6:10 he assumes that grief is to be an expected part of life in this world. It is thus clear that Paul does not prohibit λύπη in all circumstances.[62] However, this does not invalidate Barclay's point. Whatever Paul thought in other letters does not

[59] Harnisch, *Eschatologische Existenz*, 24, views this as a prophylactic statement. However, Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 263-264, argues that "the present subjunctive with μη prohibits the continuation of something … thus indicating that Paul was writing to people who were grieving about their dead." Cf. Witherington, *Thessalonians*, 131.

[60] John M. G. Barclay, "'That You May Not Grieve, Like the Rest Who Have No Hope' (1 Thess 4:13): Death and Early Christian Identity," in *Not in Word Alone: The First Epistle to the Thessalonians*, ed. Morna D. Hooker, Monographic Series of "Benedictina" Biblical-Ecumenical Ection 15 (Rome: Benedictina Publishing, 2003), 131-153. Cf. Milligan, *Thessalonians*, 56; Frame, *Thessalonians*, 167; Best, *Thessalonians*, 186; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 264.

[61] λύπη/λυπέω occurs in Rom 9:2; 14:15; 2 Cor 2:1, 2[x2], 3, 4, 7; 6:10; 7:8[x2], 9[x3], 10[x2], 11; 9:7; Phil 2:27[x2]; cf. Eph 4:30.

[62] 1 Pet 2:19 assumes believers will experience λύπας by suffering unjustly. Cf John 16:6, 20 [x2], 21, 22; Matt 14:9; 1 Pet 1:6.

necessarily impact what he would say in the particular instance addressed in 1 Thessalonians; furthermore, if the author is not Paul, then he may very well have been able to prohibit grief. Throughout 1 Thessalonians there is a pattern of contrast between the behaviour of the believing community and that of those outside, and so it is best to see the same pattern at work here. The audience is not to grieve over their dead community members because of the hope they have, which is clarified in the rest of the section.

First Thessalonians 4:14 explains why the Thessalonians should not grieve—εἰ γὰρ πιστεύομεν ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἀπέθανεν καὶ ἀνέστη, οὕτως καὶ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἄξει σὺν αὐτῷ ("for since we believe that Jesus died and rose, thus also, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep"). The awkward structure of this sentence is immediately discernible. There is no apodosis about the resurrection of those who have died to match the protasis. Instead, 4:14 states that God will "bring" them. This could support the idea of resurrection—the dead will not be left dead, they will be brought, or raised, by God in the end—but it is not entirely clear. The οὕτως καί would seem to point to a parallel experience: Jesus died and rose and likewise those who have died will rise. There is also confusion over the prepositions in 4:14. It is probably best to take διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ with the verb as an adverbial phrase of instrumentality. Luckensmeyer argues, "Paul often uses διά to express agency … and in the various formulations of διά with Jesus, Christ and Lord, *this is exclusively the case*."[63] Thus, 1 Thessalonians does not make a statement about the spiritual state of the deceased (it is not saying they died "in Christ"), but rather emphasises that God will use Jesus as the intermediate agent to bring the deceased to the

[63] Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 223.

eschatological event. So, this verse emphasises the certain fact that just as God raised Jesus, so God will raise the dead as well.

There are endless suggestions for why the letter includes 4:13-18, which suggests this problem cannot be easily resolved.[64] One of the most common reconstructions is that the community did not know about the resurrection of the dead.[65] Yet, the logic of the response does not necessarily imply a concern about the fact of the resurrection itself but rather its timing in relation to the *parousia*. In 4:15, the audience is assured that the living "will by no means φθάσωμεν" the dead. He has already used φθάνω in 2:16, but in that case φθάνω had the sense of "come, arrive."[66] Here, however, it has the sense of "precede" or "come first."[67] The audience will be together with their deceased fellow believers at the moment of the *parousia* because the resurrection will be the first result of Jesus's *parousia*. There is thus a question in this passage of the relationship of the living and the dead believers at the *parousia*. In light of this, it has been proposed the audience was familiar

[64] Schmithals and Harnisch both argue Paul was responding to false teaching by gnostics who taught a spiritual resurrection for the living (Walter Schmithals, *Paul & the Gnostics*, trans. John E. Steely [Nashville: Abingdon, 1972], 123-218; Harnisch, *Eschatologische Existenz*, 19-29); however, the fact of the resurrection is not the issue in this text, but rather its timing. Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 126-132, 161-178, has argued that Paul reacts to millenarian thought in the community shaped by the popular Cabirus cult, though as we have seen in the Introduction his claims that this cult had the same expectation that their martyred God would return is not supported by the limited evidence we have for the cult in Thessalonica; Mearns, "Early Eschatological Development," argues that Paul had taught a realised eschatology that now was being challenged by the death of some of the Thessalonians, so he had to reorient his teaching to a futurist eschatology. This is unlikely, considering that—if Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians around 50 CE—he would have by this point dealt with the death of believers in other locations. For a comprehensive overview of the literature on this topic, see the table in Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 192-211.

[65] Foster, "Eschatology of the Thessalonian Correspondence," 64; Barclay, "Conflict at Thessalonica," 516-517; Dibelius, *Thessalonicher*, 23; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 35-38.

[66] BDAG, s.v. "φθάνω," 2.

[67] BDAG, s.v. "φθάνω," 1. Cf. Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. Hist.* 15.61.4; Josephus, *Ant.* 7.248.

with and influenced by Jewish apocalyptic traditions.[68] One common motif in this tradition is that those who survived to the "end times" would have some advantage over those who died before this time.[69] The most striking example is found in 4 Ezra 13:24: "Understand therefore that those who are left are more blessed than those who have died."[70] Significantly, this text also includes "something like the figure of a man … [who] flew with the clouds of heaven" (13:3), and "who will himself deliver his creation; and he will direct those who are left" (13:26).[71] Each of these ideas of the end time and God's eschatological agent can be found in 1 Thessalonians as well. Even earlier than this, Klijn argues, "the tradition of being blessed because one is present at the moment of God's acts of salvation goes back to prophetic times," citing Isa 52:10.[72] He also mentions that in apocalyptic works when the question of the fate of the deceased comes up, the answer is always that they arrive at judgment at the same time as the living; thus, the response to the question in 1 Thessalonians "is traditional. It is the answer of the apocalypses."[73] This proposal could explain why 1 Thessalonians emphasises that the resurrection of the dead will in fact be the first result of Jesus's *parousia*. Though it is difficult to know exactly which traditions the

[68] See A. F. J. Klijn, "1 Thessalonians 4.13-18 and Its Background in Apocalyptic Literature," in *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett*, ed. M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982), 67-73. Plevnik, "Taking Up," argues that only the living could be assumed into heaven, so those "who remained" were worried that the dead could not participate in the *parousia* if the resurrection happened after this event. Plevnik's views will be discussed further below.
[69] Ibid., 68-69. Cf. Crüsemann, *Pseudepigraphal Letters*, 202.
[70] OTP 1:552. Similar ideas can be found in Dan 12:12-13; Pss. Sol. 17:44; 4 Ezra 5:41f; 6:18-28; 7:27-28; 9:8; 13:24.
[71] OTP 1:551-552.
[72] Klijn, "1 Thessalonians 4.13-18," 70.
[73] Ibid., 72.

audience would have been aware of, there does seem to be some confusion about the exact timing of the resurrection in relation to the *parousia*.

First Thessalonians 4:14 strongly emphasises the confidence the audience can have that since God raised Jesus from the dead he will do the same for "those who have fallen asleep." It is difficult to determine precisely the reason of their grief beyond the death of community members, as the current lack of consensus demonstrates. What we can be sure of is that the audience is concerned that the dead believers will somehow miss out on the *parousia*. Whether that concern sprang from a lack of awareness of the resurrection of the dead or from a difficulty in incorporating all the different pieces of the eschatological scheme together, the point is that the dead will by no means miss this event. This section ends with an exhortation in 4:18 for the audience to encourage each other with the preceding teaching, demonstrating that the goal of the treatment of the *parousia* here is to console the audience in the face of death.[74]

The *Parousia* of the Lord

In this passage, the "*parousia* of the Lord" is described, without further specification of who the Lord is. However, when *parousia* appears in 1 Thessalonians elsewhere each time it is clear that the Lord is Jesus (2:19: ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ, "before our Lord Jesus in his *parousia*"; 3:13: ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, "at the

[74] Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 268-269. Selby, "'Blameless at His Coming,'" 403, argues that the author consoles the audience but also reinforces the need for holy living in this section by giving this vision of the end in between two sections of exhortation to moral purity (4:1-12 and 5:1-11).

parousia of our Lord Jesus"; 5:23: ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, "at the *parousia* of our Lord Jesus Christ"). Additionally, 1:10 describes believers as waiting for God's son from heaven, identified there as Jesus. This would appear to match the imagery of this passage, in which the Lord comes down from heaven.

In Jewish literature the noun *parousia* is relatively rare, though it always means "arrival" or "presence" in these texts (e.g. Jdt 10:18: "for her arrival [ἡ παρουσία αὐτῆς] was reported from tent to tent").[75] *Parousia* is more common in Hellenistic writings, sometimes used "as a sacred expression for the coming of a hidden divinity, who makes his presence felt by a revelation of his power, or whose presence is celebrated in the cult,"[76] though it also was used to describe a royal visit to a city by an emperor or official.[77] In Paul's epistles, *parousia* can describe a certain person's "coming" or "presence" (1 Cor 16:17; 2 Cor 7:6, 7; 10:10; Phil 1:26; 2:12). The current passage describes a particular event when the Lord will come down from heaven, and so *parousia* here also has the sense of "coming." Paul only uses *parousia* in an eschatological sense once outside of the Thessalonian correspondence, in 1 Cor 15:23, and there it is also Jesus's *parousia*.[78] *Parousia* appears in 1 Thessalonians four times in relation to Jesus's future coming and in 2 Thessalonians twice—once of Jesus and once of the man of lawlessness. In other New Testament writings *parousia* usually has an eschatological meaning. For example, in Matt 24:27, 37, and 39, *parousia* is used to speak of

[75] Cf. Josephus, *Ant*. 3.81; 9.55; 18.284; 2 Macc 8:12; 15:21; 3 Macc 3:17.
[76] BDAG, s.v. "παρουσία," 2b. E.g. Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. Hist.* 3.65.1: "διαβοηθείσης δὲ κατὰ πάντα τόπον τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ παρουσίας"; 4.3.3: "τὴν παρουσίαν ὑμνεῖν τοῦ Διονύσου."
[77] BDAG, s.v. "παρουσία," 2b. E.g. Polybius, *Hist*. 18.48.4: "τὴν Ἀντιόχου παρουσίαν"; P.Tebt. 48.14, "τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως παρουσίαν"; 116.57, "ἐν το(ῖς) βα(σιλέως) παρουσίας."
[78] There is a variant reading of 1 Cor 1:8 in D, F, and G which has παρουσία rather than ἡμέρα.

the "coming of the son of man" and the *parousia* of Jesus in Matt 24:3. James 5:8, in language parallel to 1 Thess 3:13, urges believers to "strengthen your hearts [στηρίξατε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν], for the coming of the Lord is near" [ὅτι ἡ παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου ἤγγικεν].[79] In the present passage *parousia* should also be understood in an eschatological sense, pointing to the coming of the Lord Jesus at a future time.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Adolf Deissmann argued that the term *parousia* as well as the imagery of Christ's second return were both thoroughly Hellenistic, taken from the context of a Hellenistic royal welcome.[80] Peterson built on Deissmann's initial claims, finding ἀπάντησις and cognates in royal *parousia* texts, and he argued that ἀπάντησις was a technical term for the citizens going out to meet (εἰς ἀπάντησιν) a visiting royal figure outside the city and accompany him back to the city for further celebrations; Peterson termed this an *Einholung*, a "bringing in" of the Lord.[81] In this understanding of the scene the Lord will approach earth, believers will go up to meet him in the air, and then they will accompany him back to the earth where they will all dwell together forever. While 1 Thess 4:13-18 does not indicate a return to earth—for the believers are left in the air with Jesus, and the final destination is not specified—if an *Einholung* is in view, the return to

[79] And the previous verse urges them to be patient "until the coming of the Lord" [ἕως τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου].

[80] Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), 372-378.

[81] Peterson, "Die Einholung des Kyrios." Cf. Erik Peterson, "ἀπάντησις," *TDNT* 1:380-381. Peterson's legacy has been influential on this topic. He is followed by Dibelius, *Thessalonicher*, 28; Robert H. Gundry, "The Hellenization of Dominical Tradition and Christianization of Jewish Tradition in the Eschatology of 1-2 Thessalonians," *NTS* 33 (1987): 161-178, 161-169; Best, *Thessalonians*, 199-200; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 131; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 319-320.

earth could be implicitly understood, though this is reading into the image.[82] However, Peterson has been criticised for ignoring relevant Jewish texts in his exploration of the terms and images in this passage (such as the proliferation of εἰς ἀπάντησιν throughout the Greek Jewish scriptures), with Dupont arguing, "Avant de conclure à la dépendance de Paul à l'égard de l'hellénisme, il eût fallu se demander si le judaïsme ne pouvait pas, lui aussi, fournir une explication valable de la manière dont l'Apôtre s'exprime."[83] Unlike *parousia*, ἀπάντησις is used frequently in the Greek Jewish scriptures for a meeting of some sort between people (always in the formula εἰς ἀπάντησιν, apart from 2 Macc 12:30; 14:30; 15:12; 3 Macc 1:19).[84] This is a critical argument against Peterson and those who would follow him, for there is no evidence that ἀπάντησις was a technical term. The opposition of Hellenistic and Jewish influence continues in the subsequent literature, with scholars seeing only one or the other as the "real" background for the portrayal of the *parousia* here.

In response to Peterson, Dupont instead argues that the Sinai theophany of Exod 19:10-18 served as the prototype for the scene in 4:13-18.[85] The elements in common between the two passages include the trumpet, cloud as a means of transport, descent of the Lord (καταβαίνω), and meeting of the people with the Lord (LXX Exod 19:17:

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[82] Cf. Seth Turner, "The Interim, Earthly Messianic Kingdom in Paul," *JSNT* 25 (2003): 323-342.

[83] Dupont, *L'Union avec le Christ*, 67. Dupont, 68, claims this word and its synonyms occur 129 times in the Greek Jewish scriptures. He also argues that the phrase in 1 Thess 4:17, εἰς ἀπάντησιν, occurs only once in Peterson's examples. Cf. M. Cosby, "Hellenistic Formal Receptions," *BBR* 4 (1994): 15-34.

[84] Judg 4:18; 11:31, 34; 14:5; 15:14; 19:3; 20:25, 31; 1 Kgdms 4:1; 6:13; 9:14; 13:10; 13:15; 15:12; 25:32; 25:34; 30:21 [x2]; 2 Kgdms 6:20; 19:26; 1 Chr 12:18; 14:8; 19:5; 2 Chr 12:11; 15:2; 19:2; 20:17; 28:9; Jer 28:31 [x2]; 34:3; 48:6; 1 Esd 1:23; Jdt 5:4; Tob 11:16; 1 Macc 12:41; 2 Macc 12:30; 14:30; 15:12; 3 Macc 1:19. The phrase also appears in Matt 25:6 and Acts 28:15.

[85] Dupont, *L'Union avec le Christ*, 68-69; Cf. T. Francis Glasson, "Theophany and Parousia," *NTS* 34 (1988): 259-270; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 128.

εἰς συνάντησιν; 1 Thess 4:17: εἰς ἀπάντησιν). However, a significant element missing in this text is the resurrection of the dead, which only appears in literature starting in the Second Temple period. Further developing Dupont's critique of Peterson, Plevnik likewise emphasises a strictly Jewish background, though he argues, "Paul may not have been directly influenced by LXX Exod 19:10-18 but, rather, by the apocalyptic depictions of God's end-time coming in which the Sinai depiction was utilized and adapted."[86] It cannot be denied that 1 Thessalonians is influenced by Jewish apocalyptic thought, especially as 1 Thess 3:13 alludes to Zech 14:5, which is itself representative of this tradition. Further, as Hurtado argues, "In the process of the early christological appropriation of biblical tradition, believers drew upon the theme of YHWH's eschatological return/triumph, especially to describe Jesus's future return in glory."[87] This is a development of theophany texts, which though originally referring to past revelation of YHWH (e.g. on Sinai) came to have eschatological import in the post-exilic period, often being combined with the theme of the day of the Lord.[88] Theophanic themes are incorporated in these later texts, such as the trumpets that announce God's presence in the day of the Lord (Isa 27:13; Joel 2:1, 15; Zech 9:14; Zeph 1:14-18). Likewise, cloud imagery features in these texts, though clouds are

[86] Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia*, 10. For example, 1 En. 1:3-9 echoes the Sinai theophany in many ways.

[87] Larry W. Hurtado, "YHWH's Return to Zion: A New Catalyst for Earliest High Christology," in *God and the Faithfulness of Paul*, ed. Heilig, Hewitt, and Bird, 417-438, 435.

[88] Cf. Edward Adams, "The 'Coming of God' Tradition and its Influence on New Testament Parousia Texts," in *Biblical Traditions in Transmission: Essays in Honour of Michael A. Knibb*, ed. Charlotte Hempel and Judith M. Lieu, JSJSup 111 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 1-19: "As the tradition of God's coming develops within the OT, it becomes more future-oriented and, finally, eschatological.... The "eschatological" coming of God becomes a prominent feature of subsequent Jewish future expectation" (5). He cites: 2 Bar. 48:39; LAB 19:12-13; 1 En. 1:2-9; 90:15-17; 91:7; 100:4; 102: 1-3; 2 En. 32:1; Jub. 1:28; T. Ab. A 13:4; T. Mos. 10:3-10; T. Levi 8:11; T. Jud. 22:2.

not reserved for God as they can also transport other figures into God's presence, such as "the one like the son of man" in Dan 7:13.[89] Angels often feature prominently in Jewish apocalyptic texts; for example, Dan 12:1 mentions Michael, the "great angel" (OG: Μιχαηλ ὁ ἄγγελος ὁ μέγας), specifically in connection with the resurrection of the dead at the end.[90] As discussed in the previous section, 1 Thess 3:13 also refers to a multitude of angels accompanying Jesus in his *parousia*, following Zech 14:5. Plevnik's particular contribution has been to draw attention to assumption scenes—where a figure like Enoch is "caught up" to the heavens (cf. 2 En 3)—in some apocalyptic literature that, he argues, best explain the language of ἁρπάζω in 4:17.[91] As he has argued, in royal welcome scenes the people take the initiative by going out to greet the emperor while in 1 Thess 4:17 God is the actor and the faithful are passive.[92] Instead, in an assumption interpretation believers are caught up into heaven, and it is in heaven where they will be with the Lord forever. Paul does use the same verb, ἁρπάζω, to describe someone caught up to heaven in 2 Cor 12:2, so this is an interesting link. It is difficult to see why Jesus would come from heaven (1:10) to meet the believers halfway, just to return immediately to heaven—why not just assume them straight to heaven?—but Plevnik is certainly correct to highlight the passive nature of those who are

[89] This same imagery, based on Dan 7:13, is found in the New Testament in Mark 13:26 and Matt 24:30.

[90] Michael is also prominent in 1 En. 9:1; 10:11; 20:5-6; 24:6. The repeated identification of Michael as the chief angel in Jude 9 ("archangel" here as well) and Rev 12:7, along with his role in Dan, makes it likely the archangel in 1 Thess 4:16 is Michael as well, though the author is not concerned with such speculations.

[91] Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia*, 60-63, 69-97; Cf. Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 170; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 226, 232.

[92] See Plevnik, "1 Thessalonians 4,17," 541. Cf. Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 277.

"caught up."[93] In this case, they are "caught up" not into the heavens, but into the Lord's presence. Clouds, angels, trumpets, the Lord's descent, and assumption of the living all figure in Jewish apocalyptic texts; however, the use of the particularly Hellenistic term *parousia* in connection with εἰς ἀπάντησιν does require explanation.[94]

There has recently been a return to the emphasis on Graeco-Roman influence in this passage, as James Harrison argues that the event in 1 Thess 4:13-18 is intentionally described as a Hellenistic *parousia* as a "radical subversion of Roman eschatological imagery and terminology."[95] He thus sees in this passage an intentional critique of the Roman empire and its ideology. While it is likely the case that "peace and security" in 5:3 references Roman propaganda (see below), it is questionable that the real goal of this passage is to critique Rome. In 4:13-18 the emphasis is on the resurrection of the dead and the certainty that all believers will be together with Christ—the goal is to comfort the audience in the light of death in the community, not to urge the audience to resist the forces of the empire. If this is a political critique, it is a subtle one. Instead, 1 Thessalonians

[93] Moss and Baden, "1 Thessalonians 4.13-18," 199-212 have attempted to show that the believers will remain with Jesus in the air by appealing to rabbinic eschatological traditions in which the righteous are believed to be lifted in the air in the end in order to escape falling into Sheol. It is possible that the author was aware of these traditions but given the uncertain origin and dating of rabbinic material that remains speculative.

[94] Κελεύσμα ("a command") does not appear in apocalyptic texts, and only elsewhere in OG Prov 30:27 in a military metaphor. The verb κελεύω ("order, command") is more common, and here it should just be understood as a command to start the events, without the need to suggest a Jewish or Graeco-Roman background as the sole influence on the image.

[95] James R. Harrison "Paul and the Imperial Gospel at Thessaloniki," *JSNT* 25 (2002): 71-96 (92-93); idem., *Paul and the Imperial Authorities,* 62: "there is little doubt that in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 Paul is critiquing the imperial propaganda of his day." Cf. Edgar Krentz, "Roman Hellenism and Paul's Gospel," *TBT* 26/6 (1988): 328-337, 336.

uses Graeco-Roman terminology to paint a picture that helps the audience understand the fate of both themselves and their dead community members.[96]

None of the proposals above perfectly align with the description in 1 Thess 4:13-18, which likely means 1 Thessalonians is not committed to just one literal depiction. Though interpreters have often emphasised one background over another, we do not have to keep the Jewish and Graeco-Roman imagery apart—they can mutually inform each other.[97] On the one hand, there are indeed Graeco-Roman elements that would resonate with the gentile audience since the term *parousia* is best understood in the context of a formal royal welcome. Furthermore, though εἰς ἀπάντησιν is not a technical term for a royal welcome, it is used in texts that speak of such an event, so since it is combined with *parousia* it makes sense that 1 Thessalonians here employs imagery that the audience will understand. This could imply that the believers return with Jesus to the earth after meeting him in the air, but that is not the focus of the passage—instead, the main point is that the return of the Lord Jesus is a majestic affair, which enables all those who will still be alive at the end (among whom the author includes himself) to be together forever both with the Lord and with "those who have fallen asleep." On the other hand, there are clear Jewish elements as

[96] As Peter Oakes, "Re-mapping the Universe: Paul and the Emperor in 1 Thessalonians and Philippians," *JSNT* 27 (2005): 301-322, argues, "If παρουσία and ἀπάντησις do have any political weight here, it is probably given to them by the unexpectedly weighty apocalyptic of v. 16. The two terms may become political translations of apocalyptic into a form understandable to a Greek audience: political hooks on which the audience can hang the apocalyptic imagery. However, these political hooks are not prominent terms in Roman eschatology, or, indeed, Roman ideology in general" (317). See also Seyoon Kim's critique of Wright's anti-imperial reading of Paul, "Paul and the Roman Empire," in *God and the Faithfulness of Paul*, ed. Heilig, Hewitt, and Bird, 277-308.

[97] Cf. Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, 234: "Une influence n'exclut pas l'autre. Paul ne vit pas en vase close."

well; the trumpet, cloud, assumption of the living, descent of the Lord, and angels all fit with typical portrayals of "the coming of God," a motif which is now applied to Jesus as God's eschatological agent. Likewise, the connection of resurrection with God's coming is well-established in Second Temple Jewish texts. Thus, this is a composite scene in which the author draws on imagery available to him in order to assure his grieving audience that none of the believers—dead or alive—will fail to participate in the Lord's *parousia*. He highlights the regal return of the king in his *parousia*, but also shows that this is a theophany, or better yet, a Christophany, as the Lord Jesus will arrive to gather *all* his people in the end. However, it also goes beyond a theophany—not only will the Lord appear, but he will in fact be united with his people forever as they are caught up to join him. This is a Christophany that will have no end. The audience's anxiety over their deceased fellow believers can then be understood—they were worried that their dead friends and family would not take part in the *parousia* and so might miss out on being united with the Lord, thus somehow missing out on salvation.

A Word of the Lord

One perennially debated issue in 1 Thess 4 is the referent of the λόγος κυρίου ("word of the Lord") mentioned in verse 15.[98] The two most popular solutions are that the λόγος κυρίου refers to: (1) a prophetic revelation from the risen Jesus to "Paul" or another prophet[99] or

[98] For a recent comprehensive treatment of this topic, see Pahl, *Discerning the 'Word of the Lord'*.
[99] Milligan, *Thessalonians*, 58; Best, *Thessalonians*, 192-193; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 226; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 268-270; Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 225; Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia*, 81; Harnisch, *Eschatologische Existenz*, 39-41; Mearns, "Early Eschatological Development," 21-22; Dobschütz, takes it as a personal revelation to Paul himself, (*Thessalonicher-*

(2) traditional eschatological teaching stemming from the Jesus tradition.[100] The most convincing evidence for the first proposal is the use of λόγος κυρίου/ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου in the Greek Jewish scriptures to introduce prophetic oracles.[101] The problem with this argument is that λόγος κυρίου is never otherwise used in the New Testament in reference to prophetic utterances. Those who support the second view point to the similarities between 4:15-17 and the material in Matt 24:30-31. There are indeed similar images such as angels, trumpet, and clouds. However, the image of the clouds has a different function in Matt 24:30, bringing down the Son of Man from heaven, whereas in 1 Thess 4:17 the clouds are the vehicle for the caught-up believers; nor does Matt 24 contain the idea of the resurrection. Despite this discrepancy, the second proposal is still convincing. The Son of Man's descent on clouds does not preclude the believers' being caught up in clouds as well; rather, the clouds are understood as a means of transportation. Furthermore, in both Matt 24 and Mark 13 the section on the Son of Man coming with clouds is then shortly followed by a call to watchfulness. The same pattern is present in 1 Thessalonians—chapter 4 is concerned with the coming of the Lord, and chapter 5 with a call to watchfulness.

Briefe, 194); Raymond F. Collins, "Tradition, Redaction and Exhortation in 1 Thess 4,13-5,11," in *Studies on the First Letter*, ed. Collins, 154-172, sees "the expression of a *dictum* of early Christian prophecy" (159).

[100] Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 125; Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, 538-539; Lars Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted: The Formation of Some Jewish Apocalyptic Texts and of the Eschatological Discourse Mark 13 par*, trans. Neil Tomkinson, ConBNT 1 (Lund: Gleerup, 1966), 188-190, 246; Gundry, "Hellenization of Dominical Tradition," 164; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 321; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 171; E. P. Sanders, *Paul: The Apostle's Life, Letters, and Thought* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 209-211. As an agraphon: Morris, *Thessalonians*, 141; Frame, *Thessalonians*, 171; Joachim Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings of Jesus*, trans. Reginald H. Fuller, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 1964), 80-82; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 38-41.

[101] OG Ezek 23:1; 35:1; Hos 1:1; Amos 5:1; Joel 1:1; 3 Kgdms 13:1, 2, 5, 32 (these last four are in the same formulation as 1 Thess 4:15: ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου).

More recently, Michael Pahl has argued that neither of these two interpretations is correct and that instead the λόγος κυρίου "refers to the proclaimed gospel message about Jesus centred on his death and resurrection which forms the theological foundation of Paul's response."[102] He reaches this conclusion through an analysis of Paul's "epistemic authorities" in his letters, showing that Paul usually makes his arguments from the epistemic authority of Jesus's death and resurrection.[103] Furthermore, Pahl argues that linguistically λόγος κυρίου is never used to indicate prophetic utterances in the New Testament, nor to invoke a saying of the earthly Jesus.[104] Pahl, I think, has given a more helpful framework for understanding the λόγος κυρίου than the other two options. But while Pahl offers an innovative interpretation, the significant parallels with the Synoptic traditions in this passage cannot be ignored, especially the parallel structures between 1 Thess 4-5, Matt 24, and Mark 13. As Pahl himself admits, Paul does regard the Jesus tradition as an epistemic authority.[105] It seems best, therefore, to understand the occurrence of ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου in 1 Thess 4:15 in reference to information received from the Jesus tradition. However, the "word of the Lord" does not have to be understood as a direct quotation of a particular saying for, as Jens Schröter argues, Paul "understands 'words of the Lord' to be a teaching legitimated through the Risen and Exalted One, which is to be made concrete by his apostles and prophets in different situations. The intention does not

[102] Pahl, *Discerning*, 5.
[103] Pahl defines this as: "something which is external to Paul himself, which is accessed and interpreted by Paul through his own experience of it and in the midst of his total life experience, and which authoritatively contributes to and shapes his thought and discourse" (ibid., 35).
[104] Ibid., 126-127.
[105] Ibid., 159.

consist then in the word-for-word transmission of sayings of the earthly Jesus but in connecting to a tradition grounded through the authority of the Lord as the basis of early Christian teaching."[106] Thus, the "word" in 1 Thessalonians is not to be understood as a quotation of a saying of Jesus, but rather a reference to the authoritative teaching of the Lord. Additionally, while ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου is clearly not a technical term used to introduce a Jesus saying, it is notable that in Paul's letters κύριος appears in instances where Paul does reflect knowledge of Jesus tradition. In 1 Cor 7:10, for example, Paul introduces the topic of marriage and divorce by writing: τοῖς δὲ γεγαμηκόσιν παραγγέλλω, οὐκ ἐγὼ ἀλλ᾽ ὁ κύριος ("but to the married I command, not I but the Lord"). The information following this statement is similar to the sayings of Jesus in Mark 10 and Matt 19. Paul writes that "the Lord (ὁ κύριος) commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" in 1 Cor 9:14. In 1 Cor 11:23, Paul describes teaching that he received from ὁ κύριος ("the Lord") about the Last Supper, closely matching Jesus's words in Luke 22:19-20. In each of these instances, the tradition Paul references comes from ὁ κύριος, but is never a direct quotation that can be clearly identified in the Synoptics or other sources. This is the most satisfactory explanation for the λόγος κυρίου in 1 Thessalonians as well.

There is also a question of the extent of material that is included in the "word of the Lord." Most commentators argue that in 4:15b Paul presents in his own words a summary about the material from the Jesus tradition, applying it to the audience's

[106] Jens Schröter, *From Jesus to the New Testament: Early Christian Theology and the Origin of the New Testament Canon*, trans. Wayne Coppins, BMSEC (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013), 256.

particular situation, while the actual "word of the Lord" occurs in 4:16-17a.[107] The cluster of unfamiliar words in the Pauline corpus appears in 4:16-17a. Furthermore, the concern of precedence does not appear in any of the parallel uses of this tradition and so it seems likely that these verses describe the issue in Thessalonica. Thus, the material from the Jesus tradition that 1 Thessalonians incorporates—but does not directly quote—appears in 4:16-17a. In summary, in 1 Thess 4:15, ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου does not introduce a prophetic utterance but rather indicates that 4:16-17 is a reference to authoritative teaching of Jesus, applying it to the specific context of the audience's confusion in order to support the argument that both living and dead believers will experience the Lord's *parousia* together.

In this passage it is apparent that—due to some misunderstanding about the timings of the resurrection of the dead and the *parousia*—the audience is concerned about the fate of community members who have recently died, thinking that somehow they will miss out on Jesus's *parousia*. In response to this concern, 4:13-18 demonstrates that the dead will certainly meet the Lord in his *parousia*, for their resurrection is the first result of his coming and, indeed, occurs before all believers are together caught up and united with him. Using a mosaic of Jewish apocalyptic and "day of YHWH" imagery as well as Graeco-Roman imperial visit terms, and making reference to eschatological Jesus tradition, 4:13-18 portrays

[107] Weima, *Thessalonians*, 320-321; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 172: "v. 15b represents the conclusion drawn by Paul himself from the apocalyptic discourse tradition going back to Jesus. Vv. 15b-17 may well constitute his own midrash on the tradition." Cf. Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 126; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 32-33; Harnisch, *Eschatologische Existenz*, 40-43; Boring, *Thessalonians*, 166, who does not view this as a Jesus saying, also argues that the logion is to be found in verses 16-17. Richard, *Thessalonians*, 226, is one of the few to argue that the τοῦτο of verse 15 points back to verse 14b, in which is found a prophetic revelation to Paul.

the majesty of the Lord's eschatological arrival, the Christophany when he comes to rescue all his people—both those who have already died and those who still remain.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-11

In 1 Thess 5, the focus transitions to what is called ἡμέρα κυρίου "("the day of the Lord").[108] There are a variety of issues in relation to eschatology in this section. In particular, there is a question of the relationship of the *parousia* of the Lord in 4:13-18 with "the day of the Lord" here, as well as a seeming difference in tone between the two sections. Thus, it is important to establish the relationship between 5:1-11 and 4:13-18 before proceeding to a closer examination of the passage.

The Relation of 5:1-11 to 4:13-18

Scholars debate whether there is a topic break between chapters 4 and 5. One view—assuming Pauline authorship—is that the περὶ δέ signifies Paul's response to certain questions he received from the Thessalonians. Many scholars argue that in 1 Corinthians Paul uses περὶ δέ to introduce a new topic of discussion, often answering a question that the Corinthians had asked in their letter to him (1 Cor 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12), and so he is

[108] Gerhard Friedrich, "1. Thessalonicher 5, 1-11, der apologetische Einschub eines Späteren," *ZTK* 70 (1973): 288-315, has suggested that 5:1-11 is the addition of a later author, familiar with Pauline theology, and possibly from the Lukan community. His argument is based on the differences in vocabulary and eschatological outlook between 1 Thess 4 and 1 Thess 5. However, 1 Thess 4, which Friedrich regards as authentic, also contains much unPauline material, and the claim the two chapters have differing eschatological outlooks does not hold up, as will be seen in the conclusion of this chapter. See Joseph Plevnik's critique of Friedrich, "1 Thess 5,1-11: Its Authenticity, Intention, and Message" *Biblica* 60 (1979): 71-90, 72-74.

doing the same in 1 Thessalonians.[109] However, this consensus view has been challenged by Margaret Mitchell, who argues that throughout Greek literature περὶ δέ is "simply a topic marker, a shorthand way of introducing the next subject of discussion."[110] The formula does not have to designate a response to questions from a previous letter; it can also be used to introduce topics of which the audience should be well-aware (e.g. 1 Thess 4:9—they already know about brotherly love). Thus, 5:1 broaches a subject of which the audience is already aware. This is in contrast to 4:13, where it is a topic of which they currently are unaware. This could support the idea that the *parousia* in chapter 4 and the day of the Lord in chapter 5 are separate topics, an argument considered further in the discussion below. While περὶ δέ does indicate transition, it is clear that both sections are specifically concerned with eschatology.

Furthermore, the two sections are set up in different ways. In 4:13, the author writes that he does not want the audience to be ignorant about the ensuing topic, implying they are currently unaware and he writes to give them new information. This same phrasing is used by Paul in Rom 1:13 (οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι πολλάκις προεθέμην ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, "I do not wish for you to be ignorant, brothers"), Rom 11:25 (Οὐ γὰρ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο, "For I do not wish for you to be ignorant, brothers, of

[109] Some argue that περὶ δέ likewise signifies Paul's response to a letter the Thessalonians had written him and sent through Timothy. See Chalmer E. Faw, "On the Writing of First Thessalonians," *JBL* 71 (1952): 217-225; Green, *Thessalonians*, 230. However, if Paul is the author, it is most likely that Timothy brought an oral report back to Paul, which contained certain concerns which the Thessalonians had. This is the view supported by Weima, *Thessalonians*, 344; Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 71; Boring, *Thessalonians*, 157, 176.

[110] See Margaret M. Mitchell, "Concerning ΠΕΡΙ ΔΕ in 1 Corinthians," *NovT* 31 (1989): 229-256, 234. She also argues that the phrase "is one of a variety of forms used to proceed to a new subject," 238.

this mystery"), 1 Cor 10:1 (Οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες ὑπὸ τὴν νεφέλην ἦσαν καὶ πάντες διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης διῆλθον, "For I do not wish for you to be ignorant, brothers"), 1 Cor 12:1 (Περὶ δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν, ἀδελφοί, οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, "Concerning the spiritual things, brothers, I do not wish for you to be ignorant), and 2 Cor 1:8 (Οὐ γὰρ θέλομεν ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν τῆς γενομένης ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, "We do not wish for you to be ignorant, brothers"). In each of these passages, Paul is concerned that his audience does not have sufficient knowledge about the topic at hand, so he provides more evidence for them. However, 1 Thess 5:1 states that there is no need to write to the Thessalonians about the topic since they already, accurately, know about it.[111] The same formulation appears in 1 Thess 4:9: Περὶ δὲ τῆς φιλαδελφίας οὐ χρείαν ἔχετε γράφειν ὑμῖν, αὐτοὶ γὰρ ὑμεῖς θεοδίδακτοί ἐστε εἰς τὸ ἀγαπᾶν ἀλλήλους ("Concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another").[112] It is thus implied that the author does not need to add anything to their instruction—though he does so anyway. There is a similar formulation in 1 Thess 1:8, where the author writes that there is no need for him to add anything to their witness. This formulation does not occur elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, but from the appearances in 1 Thessalonians, it is clear what is meant. The information provided in this section is not new, but rather an emphasis upon what has already been communicated to them. The two respective topics are in different categories in the author's mind, even while they are

[111] BDF §495(1).

[112] Friedrich, "1. Thessalonicher 5, 1-11," 299, argues, "οὐ χρείαν ἔχετε 5,1 ist nicht wie 4,9 wörtlich gemeint, sondern eine Formel, die sich an 4,9 anlehnt." However, this depends on his thesis that a later writer created 5:1-11, which cannot be supported. Instead, 5:1 indicates, just as 4:9 did, that the topic is already known by the audience.

related to each other. Therefore, 5:1-11 has a different focus from 4:13-18, though both are concerned with eschatology and so should be read together. This means that the *parousia* and "the day of the Lord" are indeed connected. The precise nature of the relationship will be determined through further analysis of this section.

The Day of the Lord

The first occurrence in 1 Thessalonians of "the day of the Lord" is in 5:2. In fact, it is the only use of that phrase in 1 Thessalonians, as 5:4 only speaks of the ἡμέρα ("day") without a modifier—though the day of the Lord is implied there by the context. But, who is the Lord in this verse? Is it God or Jesus? Or someone else entirely? Many simply argue that the day of YHWH in the prophetic books becomes the day of Jesus in the New Testament and is thus also identical with the *parousia*. Malherbe, for instance, asserts, "What is said of the Day of Yahweh in the classical prophets is said of the Day of the Lord Jesus by Paul."[113] This could mean that the *parousia* and the day of the Lord are terms used by Paul for the same event. However, there are differences between the depiction of the *parousia* in chapter 4 and the characteristics of the day of the Lord in chapter 5, and it is notable that 5:1-11 at no point references the *parousia*, which had just been discussed. Likewise, the day of the Lord is never mentioned in connection with the *parousia* throughout this letter. Thus, the question of their relationship must be carefully considered before coming to a conclusion.

[113] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 291. Also Dibelius, *Thessalonicher*, 28-29: "Der alte Name ‚Tag Javes', Am 5_{18} schon vorausgesetzt, bezeichnet hier den Tag des Messias."

Considering the topic break in 5:1, signified by the περί δέ, it is reasonable to assert that there is a shift in focus here. This is also apparent in the imagery used; while 4:13-18 was full of hopeful and joyful images of celebration and expectation, the imagery in 5:1-11 is that of destruction, pain, and unexpectedness—though this imagery is qualified to exclude believers from the negative effects. John Barclay addresses this seeming disconnect between the discussion of the *parousia* and of the day of the Lord when considering a *Sitz im Leben* for Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians. He observes, "when Paul discusses the visible descent of Christ from heaven in 4:13-18 he talks of the *parousia* of Christ[114] rather than 'the day of the Lord,' while in 5:1-11 he associates 'the day of the Lord' particularly with the sudden destruction of unbelievers (5:2-3)."[115] Barclay clarifies that he does not believe Paul intended to communicate a temporal distinction between the *parousia* and the day of the Lord. Wanamaker argues that "the theme of parousia is still very much the topic of discussion in 5:1-11, but the focus shifts to parenesis concerning the need for constant vigilance and readiness for the arrival of the parousia."[116] Luckensmeyer offers a similar argument, that Paul views the *parousia* "as identical with the day of the Lord, although there is a different emphasis associated with each (n.b. celebration in 1 Thess 4:15-17; judgment in 5:1-3)."[117] All of these interpretations contend that the *parousia* and the day of the Lord are simply different terms for the same event.

[114] However, the author's actual phrasing is the *parousia* of the Lord (παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου) not the *parousia* of Jesus, which may show that "the Lord" is the focus of both 4:13-18 and 5:1-11.
[115] Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 527.
[116] Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 176.
[117] Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, 289.

"The day of YHWH" is a common phrase in the Hebrew prophetic books and יום יהוה (or יום ליהוה) is consistently translated as ἡμέρα (τοῦ) κυρίου ("day of the Lord") in the Greek versions.[118] It is notable that all of these references occur only in the prophetic books.[119] The only other places in the New Testament where ἡμέρα κυρίου appears in the same form as 1 Thess 5:2 are Acts 2:20, quoting OG Joel 3:4, and 2 Pet 3:10, quoting the same tradition as 1 Thess 5:2: ἥξει δὲ ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτης ("the day of the Lord will come like a thief").[120] The occurrence in 2 Peter is interesting as in this text this event is clearly the day of God rather than the day of Christ, for 3:12 speaks of τὴν παρουσίαν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμέρας ("the coming of the day of God"). So, is it also the day of God in 1 Thessalonians?[121]

[118] See OG Amos 5:18, 20; Isa 2:12; 13:6, 9; Ezek 7:10; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11; 3:4; 4:14; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7, 14; Mal 3:19 (MT 3:19 only has היום without יהוה), 22 (MT 3:23). In Amos 5:20, Joel 2:11, Zeph 1:7; Ezek 30:3 κυρίος is articular. Cf. Zeph 2:2-3 (ἡμέραν θυμοῦ κυρίου in 2:2 and ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς κυρίου in 2:3 יום אף-יהוה: "day of the Lord's anger/wrath"). Zech 12-14 repeatedly speaks of what will happen ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ("on that day"); though it is not termed ἡμέρα κυρίου the same concept is present in these chapters, for "that day" belongs to the κυρίος. Mal 3:2 describes ἡμέραν εἰσόδου αὐτοῦ ("the day of his coming"), when the κυρίος will come to his temple (3:1) in judgment (3:5).

[119] Though, the similar phrase ביום אף-יהוה ("day of the Lord's anger") occurs in Lam 2:22.

[120] In Rev 16:14, though missing the exact form ἡμέρα (τοῦ) κυρίου, contains the same idea of a "day" that is also God's: τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς μεγάλης τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ παντοκράτορος ("the great day of God the Almighty"). Like 1Thess 5:2 and 2 Pet 3:10, this day is said to "come like a thief": Ἰδοὺ ἔρχομαι ὡς κλέπτης. μακάριος ὁ γρηγορῶν. The call to "keep awake" is a further connection with 1 Thess 5. Cf. Rev 3:3 where Jesus threatens, "If therefore you do not wake up, I will come like a thief" (οὖν μὴ γρηγορήσῃς ἥξω ὡς κλέπτης); Gos. Thom. 21, which does not set this saying in an eschatological context but rather warns readers to be on guard against the world.

[121] Friedrich, "1 Thessalonicher 5, 1-11," 304: "Mit Kyrios ist 4,15 Christus gemeint, 5,2 aber wahrscheinlich Gott," and Raymond F. Collins "The Theology of Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians," in *Studies on the First Letter*, ed. Collins, 230-252, 249, who does argue this is the day of God.

In Paul's letters, κύριος can refer to God,[122] but in the majority of cases it refers to Jesus.[123] When κύριος is used for God, it is usually in a quotation from or allusion to a passage from the Greek Jewish scriptures.[124] Though, in general, κύριος means Jesus in the Pauline corpus, this does not mean "the day of the Lord" must denote the day of Jesus in 1 Thess 5:2, as it could be that 1 Thessalonians uses the phrase as a technical term, drawing on the language of the Greek Jewish scriptures. Apart from 2 Thess 2:2, the only other place in the Pauline corpus where "the day of the Lord" occurs without being clearly identified as the day of Jesus is in 1 Cor 5:5; there is a textual variant which does append Ἰησοῦ to the end of the phrase, but this is easily understood as a later scribal addition.[125] In this case, the day of the Lord is specifically about judgment, for Paul commands the congregation to cast out a member guilty of sexual immorality "so that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord." Whatever this difficult verse means, it is clear the man is to be cast out for the purpose of judgment because "God will judge those outside" (1 Cor 5:13). Elsewhere in the Pauline corpus there are two similar constructions: "the day of our Lord Jesus" (1 Cor 1:8;[126]

[122] See Rom 4:8; 9:28, 29; 11:3, 34; 12:19; 15:11; 1 Cor 3:5, 20; 14:21; 2 Cor 6:17, 18.

[123] BDAG, s.v. "κύριος, II." See Rom 1:4, 7; 4:24; 5:1, 11, 21; 6:23; 7:25; 8:39; 10:9, 12, 13; 12:11; 13:14; 14:4, 6[x3], 8[x3], 14; 15:6, 30; 16:2, 8, 11, 12[x2], 13, 18, 20, 22; 1 Cor 1:2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 31; 2:8, 16; 4:4, 5, 17, 19; 5:4[x2]; 6:11, 13[x2], 14, 17; 7:10, 12, 17, 22[x2], 25[x2], 32[x2], 34, 35, 39; 8:6[x2]; 9:1[x2], 2, 5, 14; 10:21[x2], 22, 26; 11:11, 23[x2], 26, 27[x2], 32; 12:3, 5; 14:37; 15:31, 57, 58[x2]; 16:7, 10, 19, 22, 23; 2 Cor 1:2, 3, 14; 2:12; 3:16, 17[x2], 18[x2]; 4:5, 14; 5:6, 8, 11; 8:5, 9, 19, 21; 10:8, 17, 18; 11:17, 31; 12:1, 8; 13:10, 13; Gal 1:3, 19; 5:10; 6:14, 18; Phil 1:2, 14; 2:11, 19, 24, 29; 3:1, 8, 20; 4:1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 23; 1 Thess 1:1, 3, 6, 8; 2:15, 19; 3:8, 11, 12, 13; 4:1, 2, 6, 15[x2], 16, 17[x2]; 5:9, 12, 23, 27, 28; Phlm 3, 5, 16, 20, 25. A number of these are originally YHWH texts from the Greek Jewish scriptures that have now been applied to Jesus: Rom 10:13; 14:11; 1 Cor 1:31; 2:16; 10:26; 2 Cor 10:17. Ambiguous verses, where κύριος could refer to either God or Jesus include: Rom 10:16; 1 Cor 5:5; 1 Thess 5:2.

[124] Werner Foerster, "κύριος," *TDNT* 3:1086.

[125] Most MSS add Ἰησοῦ or [ἡμῶν] Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, but B and 𝔓46 both only have κυρίου.

[126] In the previous verse, Paul also describes this day as the τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ("revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ").

2 Cor 1:14) or "the day of Christ [Jesus]" (Phil 1:6, 10; 2:16). Each of these phrases is used in reference to the community's eschatological presentation before Jesus, which does seem to be a different context than 1 Cor 5. Because of this difference, Holland argues,

> These three [Day of the Lord Jesus Christ; day of wrath; day of the Lord] really represent two 'days', one the 'day' of the Lord Jesus, the parousia, and the other a 'day' of wrath against the wicked, which the good, with proper spiritual armament, will survive, to find a blessing afterwards. These two different 'days' represent the failure of Paul to integrate fully the Old Testament idea of 'the Day of YHWH' and of God as the eschatological judge with the Christian idea of collective acceptance of the congregation (and collective rejection of the wicked) on 'the Day of Jesus Christ'.[127]

Yet, in Rom 14:10, Paul writes that "we will all stand before the judgment seat of God," and in 2 Cor 5:10, Jesus is portrayed as the judge of all, not just of believers: "For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil." This would indicate that—at least in Paul's later thought—judgment happens for both at the same time, not that there is a separate day of wrath just for unbelievers.[128] Furthermore, while 1 Thessalonians could use day of the Lord differently than Paul—if we bracket out authorship for the moment—already in the Greek Jewish scriptures salvation of God's people and judgment of God's enemies are brought together in the day of the Lord.

In the prophetic books, the day of the Lord can be a time of judgment for the enemies of God, as seen in many of the prophetic texts which portray "that day" as a day of darkness, judgment, destruction, and sorrow. For example, Isa 13:9: "For behold, the

[127] Holland, *Tradition*, 104.
[128] Cf. 1 Cor 4:4-5.

incurable day of the Lord [ἡμέρα κυρίου] comes, a day of wrath and anger."[129] Ezekiel 30:3 communicates a similar picture: "For the day of the Lord [ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου] is near; a day shall be an end of nations." Yet, in the post-exilic prophets the phrase is used to depict a day of salvation for God's people as well as wrath upon his enemies. In Zech 14:1-21, the day of the Lord is a day that brings about a renewed and restored Jerusalem which will never face destruction again; in fact, the day will not end (14:8).[130] However, at the same time that day is when "the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations [opposed to Israel] as when he fights on a day of battle" (14:3). There is a similar double function of the day in OG Mal 3:19-20: "For, behold the day of the Lord is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that is coming will kindle them.... But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings." Both of these texts combine day of the Lord and "coming of God" (theophanic) traditions into one event.[131] Thus, in the post-exilic prophets ἡμέρα κυρίου describes different aspects of God's eschatological action: destruction for his enemies and salvation for his people.

Ultimately, 4:13-18 and 5:1-11 belong together, though each makes its own individual contribution to the eschatological picture. While the *parousia* and "the day of the Lord" are the same event, the two terms are used in 1 Thess 4 and 5 to speak of two separate aspects of the eschatological event, though this does not imply that they are indeed separate.[132] The

[129] See also Isa 2:12; 13:6; Joel 1:15; 2:11; Amos 5:18; Zeph 1:7-18.
[130] Rex Mason, *The Books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, CBC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 134 states that the community who composed Zech 14 "developed a strongly apocalyptic type of future hope."
[131] As noted by Adams, "'Coming of God' Tradition," 2n8.
[132] Here I am in agreement with Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica."

transition apparent in 5:1 is introduced in order to shift the focus from the salvific nature of the *parousia* to the judgment that comes upon nonbelievers in the day of the Lord.

A Sudden Day

This "day of the Lord" arrives "like a thief in the night."[133] There are several ways to understand this metaphor. For example, some ancient Christians thought this meant that Christ would return at night, not during the day, since this is how thieves stereotypically come, in darkness.[134] There are similar motifs in the Synoptic Gospels which speak of the son of man returning unexpectedly, like a thief (Matt 24:42-44; Luke 12:39-40). The Synoptics, however, lack the phrase "in the night" present in the current verse, which suggests that this has been added to the traditional material in order to support the exhortations in the following verses, although night is implied in Matt 24:43's ποίᾳ φυλα. Another difference in the Synoptic traditions is the occurrence of "son of man" sayings. All of Paul's letters conspicuously lack the title "son of man," suggesting there may be a difference of tradition here. However, the parallels in the events described do point to a shared tradition to some extent between 1 Thessalonians and the Synoptics. There are also similar statements in 2 Pet 3:10 (Ἥξει δὲ ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτης, "the day of the Lord will come like a thief") and Rev 3:3 (ἥξω ὡς κλέπτης, καὶ οὐ μὴ γνῷς ποίαν ὥραν ἥξω ἐπὶ σέ, "I [the

[133] Richard, *Thessalonians*, 250, notes the two separate comparative elements of this verse: ὡς and οὕτως. His translation is: "the day of the Lord, like a thief at night, comes in the same way." This translation better captures the grammatical structure than the typical translation, "the day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night." However, the meaning is not lost in the typical translation.
[134] E.g. Lactantius, *Inst*. 7.19. Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 290, notes that this expectation "led to the custom of holding vigils on Easter eve."

"one like the Son of Man" (1:13)] will come like a thief, and you shall not know at what hour I will come to you"), so this was clearly a popular eschatological motif in earliest Christianity.[135] The imagery of "like a thief" has negative connotations since thieves come in secrecy and enact destruction on those they rob. The simile also describes unexpectedness, as no one ever expects a thief to come. Night and darkness, as further discussed below, are motifs used later in the same passage to describe nonbelievers. This could imply that this event—the day [of the Lord]—is meant to only affect nonbelievers. This might indicate that "the day of the Lord" is separate from the *parousia* from chapter 4, which clearly does affect believers, though it is not definitive evidence for that argument.

The passage further describes *how* "the day of the Lord" will arrive in 5:3. The formula ὅταν λέγωσιν ("whenever people say") functions to introduce the quotation εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια ("peace and security"). The origin of this phrase has divided scholars, as well as the identity of the "they" in this verse. One option is that 1 Thessalonians here refers to OG Jer 6:14: λέγοντες εἰρήνη εἰρήνη καὶ ποῦ ἐστιν εἰρήνη ("saying, 'Peace, peace.' And where is peace?").[136] The prophets and priests have been proclaiming peace to the inhabitants of the land and falsely assuring them, while God's wrath is about to fall upon them. In line with this, Malherbe argues that false prophets are in mind here; they are the ones who will experience sudden destruction.[137] It is false teachers within the congregation who are the

[135] Cf. Rev 16:14.

[136] Cf. Ezek 13:8-16. Scholars who support this view include Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 291; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 180; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 53-54.

[137] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 301-305. Cf. Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 180; Friedrich, "1 Thessalonicher 5, 1-11," 302-304, "Es muß sich um Menschen handeln, die einmal zur Gemeinde gehört haben oder die noch zur Gemeinde gehören, aber den Fragen der Naherwartung zweifelnd gegenüberstehen und sich so verhalten wie die törichten Jungfrauen (Mt 25, 1ff) oder der böse

subjects in this verse, and so it is not the nonbelieving Thessalonians who are in view. Malherbe's argument is that these false teachers are giving false security to the congregation and will receive judgment for their actions. A related proposal is that 1 Thessalonians quotes Jer 6:14, but does not refer to false prophets; instead, it is about nonbelievers who think they are safe and secure in their lives, and who do not recognise the impending destruction. The explicit use of Jer 6:14 in 1 Thess 5:3 would require Paul to replace the second εἰρήνη in the text with ἀσφάλεια. However, as Koester notes, "The LXX never uses *asphaleia* as an equivalent for Hebrew *šlm*,"[138] and ἀσφάλεια never appears elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, which would imply that the phrase "peace and security" came from another source.

The other option is that 1 Thessalonians utilises imperial language by referencing a popular Roman slogan.[139] *Pax et securitas* is the Latin equivalent, but this particular phrase is not well attested in Roman literature.[140] The same Greek phrase does, however, occur in

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Obersklave (Lk 12, 42ff).... So gibt es in der christlichen Gemeinde Prediger, die sich gegen die Naherwartung wenden. Sie wiegen manche Christen in Sicherheit, so daß diese unbekümmert in den Tag leben, nicht wachen sondern schlafen."

[138] Helmut Koester, "Imperial Ideology and Paul's Eschatology in 1 Thessalonians," in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), 158-166, 161.

[139] Holland Lee Hendrix, "Archaeology and Eschatology at Thessalonica," in *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester*, ed. Birger A. Pearson (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 107-118; Ernst Bammel, "Ein Beitrag zur paulinischen Staatsanschauung," *TLZ* 85 (1960): 837-840, 837; Koester, "Imperial Ideology," 161-162; Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica*, 262-267; Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology*, 290-291; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 347-351; Christoph vom Brocke, *Thessaloniki—Stadt des Kassander und Gemeinde des Paulus: Eine frühe christliche Gemeinde in ihrer heidnischen Umwelt*, WUNT 2/125 (Tübigen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 167-185.

[140] While not the exact phrase *pax et securitas*, Velleius Paterculus uses the terms together in *Comp. Rom. Hist.* 2.98.2: *Asiae securitatem, Macedoniae pacem reddidit* ("he restored security to Asia, peace to Macedonia"). Tacitus also combines the two words in *Hist.* 2.12: *securitate pacis* ("security of peace") and uses both in 3.53 (Moore, LCL): *illis Moesiae pacem, sibi salutem*

Plutarch, *Ant*. 40.4: ἀπιόντι δὲ εὐθὺς εἰρήνην καὶ ἀσφάλειαν εἶναι φήσαντος ("immediately as he was going away, he assured him of peace and security") and in Pss. Sol. 8:18 εἰρήνη and ἀσφάλεια are both connected with Pompey's arrival in Jerusalem. It is far more likely that the language in 5:2 echoes imperial language than that it comes from Jeremiah, for the verse in Jeremiah does not match the phrasing at all, whereas εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια does occur in the Graeco-Roman world. Thus, the subject of λέγωσιν is not a group of false prophets within the believing community. Throughout the letter, and particularly in this passage, there is a contrast between those who are inside the community and those who are outside. In 5:2 it is clear that the nonbelieving Thessalonians—those who trust in the imperial "peace and security"—will experience sudden destruction on the day of the Lord.

The suddenness of the day of the Lord is portrayed through the imagery of birth pains, using a phrase found also in the Synoptic birth accounts and apocalyptic passages.[141] Additionally, several prophetic passages use "birth pangs" metaphorically. For example, labour pains imagery occurs in relation to the day of the Lord in Isa 13:6-9:

> Wail, for the day of the Lord [ἡ ἡμέρα κυρίου] is near and ruin will come from God! Therefore every hand will be faint, and every human soul will be afraid, and the elders will be troubled, and pangs will seize them [ὠδῖνες αὐτοὺς ἕξουσιν], as of a woman in labour [ὡς γυναικὸς τικτούσης].... For behold, the incurable day of the Lord comes [ἡμέρα κυρίου ἀνίατος ἔρχεται], with wrath and anger, to make the whole world desolate and to destroy the sinners from it.

This imagery suggests the idea of an unstoppable event. Just as labour pains are inevitable for the pregnant woman, so the day of the Lord is also unavoidable. In this passage, there

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securitatemque Italiae cordi fuisse ("their desire had been to give Moesia peace, his to give Italy safety and security").

[141] See Matt 1:18, 23; 24:19; Mark 13:17; Luke 21:23; Rev 12:2.

is no focus on the positive outcome of pregnancy; instead, the focus is on the pain, danger, and suddenness of birth pangs. This is further emphasised by οὐ μὴ ἐκφύγωσιν ("they shall not escape") which has an emphatic negative, demonstrating the surety of occurrence: escape is impossible. It must be remembered that the ones who will not escape at the end of 5:3 refer back to the beginning of the verse: those who proclaim "peace and security" are the very ones who will not escape the destruction brought by the day of the Lord. The two images employed in 5:2-3 both present the day of the Lord as an unavoidable, sudden event.

The Persons in View

First Thessalonians 5:4 introduces a new element to this discussion, signified by the δέ and the vocative ἀδελφοί. As indicated by the subject change from third person to second person, a contrast is intended with the preceding verses. This contrast is vital to understanding the emphasis in this passage. The focus has shifted to ὑμεῖς, the people to whom the epistle is addressed. They are set in a different category from the subjects of the previous verse. They are not in the darkness, whereas it is implied that those in 5:3 do belong to the darkness. The metaphor of darkness to describe immoral behaviour was commonly employed in ancient writings.[142] While the ones saying "peace and security" will be overtaken suddenly by the day of the Lord, in 5:4 it is clear that believers will not

[142] In the Jewish scriptures: Job 22:9-11, 29:3; Ps 27:1, 74:20, 82:5, 112:4; Prov 4:18-19; Isa 2:5, 5:20, 9:2, 60:19-20. Other Jewish writings: 1 En. 41.8; 4 Ezra 14:20; T. Levi 19.1; T. Naph. 2.7-10; T. Benj. 5.3; 1QS I, 9-10; III, 13, 24-25; 1QM I, 1, 3. Paul uses similar metaphors in Rom 1:21; 2:19; 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Cor 4:6; 6:14. See also Eph 4;18; 5:8-11; 6:12; Col 1:13. A particularly interesting classical usage occurs in Euripides, *Iph. taur.* 1026: κλεπτῶν γὰρ ἡ νύξ, τῆς δ'ἀληθείας τὸ φῶς ("the night belongs to thieves, the light to truth"). This closely parallels the current passage.

experience that day coming like a thief. The question is whether or not this means the day of the Lord will occur at all for believers.

The ἵνα clause functions as a result clause here.[143] In other words, the result of the audience's being "of the day" is that the day of the Lord does not καταλάβῃ ("overtake") them. The verb used, καταλαμβάνω, is different from that used in 5:2, ἔρχεται. It is significant that 1 Thessalonians uses different words here, for this does not negate 5:2 but instead qualifies it. Καταλαμβάνω can have several different meanings: (1) to win, attain; (2) to seize, overtake; (3) to come upon, surprise, catch; (4) to understand, grasp.[144] The first and fourth meanings do not make sense in this context, so can be rejected. The second meaning of "seize/overtake" could indicate that while the day of the Lord will occur, it will not affect believers in a hostile manner. Richard holds this view and argues, "the Lord's day will still come upon them unexpectedly but will not overtake them menacingly in the way a thief does an unprepared victim."[145] BDAG notes that within this second definition, καταλαμβάνω can even mean simply "arrive," "come on," which in this verse would imply that the day of the Lord will not affect the believers at all, in which case the *parousia* and "the day of the Lord" would be separate events. One aspect of the third meaning is "surprise," so that "the day of the Lord" will occur but its occurrence will not be a surprise to the believing community. Malherbe asserts that the verb is used this way throughout classical Greek texts.[146] He cites Euripides, *Iph. taur.* 1025-1026 as evidence, but line 1025

[143] BDF §391(5), §388; BDAG, s.v. "ἵνα," 3.
[144] BDAG, s.v. "καταλαμβάνω."
[145] Richard, *Thessalonians*, 252.
[146] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 294. He also cites Plutarch, *Ages*. 24.5; *Crass*. 29.5; *Cor*. 17.2. Cf. Weima, *Thessalonians*, 355.

contains λαμβάνω, not καταλαμβάνω: ὡς δὴ σκότον λαβόωντες ἐκσωθεῖμεν ἄν ("So now taking hold of the darkness, may we escape?"). Furthermore, this text does not support Malherbe's "surprise" interpretation. He also cites Pausanias, *Descr.* 10.23.7. Yet, in this passage καταλαμβάνω is best translated as "overtake": ἐστρατοπεδεύσαντο ἔνθα νὺξ κατελάμβανεν ἀναχωροῦντας ("they encamped where night overtook them as they were retreating"). Indeed, any of the texts Malherbe cites could easily—and most likely should—be translated by "overtake" or "seize" rather than "surprise." Malherbe's argument mainly rests on his assertion that the earlier imagery of the passage fits well with this interpretation, as a thief uses the cover of darkness to arrive in surprise, whereas those who are not part of the darkness will not be surprised. Furthermore, the only example BDAG cites of this verb meaning "surprise" is in fact this very verse. There is a lack of evidence for the definition "surprise," and so it should be abandoned. Therefore, the best translation is "overtake." Thus, the day of the Lord will come to believers, but it will not come in the unexpected and disastrous manner seen in 5:2-3. For those who are not a part of the believing community, the use of καταλαμβάνω reinforces the threatening nature of the day of the Lord—it will overtake them with the "sudden destruction" of 5:3. Importantly, 1 Thessalonians never states that the day will not impact believers. Instead, the focus is on the way in which it will come and how it will affect believers. The implication of 5:4 is that, because of their identity, believers will not be destroyed by the day of the Lord, unlike nonbelievers in 5:3.

The Role of Contrasting Images

Throughout this section, 1 Thessalonians contrasts those who are outside the community of faith with those who are inside. By doing so, it strengthens the group identity of believers. For example, 5:5 asserts that the members of the community are "sons of light" and "sons of day." This states positively what had been negatively stated in 5:4—believers do not belong to the darkness, thus they are sons of light and day, the opposite of darkness.[147] There is a parallel for the "sons of light" phrase in the Qumran community, where the subjects are part of the eschatological community who are opposed by "sons of darkness" (1QM). Luke 16:8 and John 12:35-36 similarly contain descriptions of believers as υἱοί [τοῦ] φωτός ("sons of [the] light"), while Eph 5:8 urges believers to act as τέκνα φωτός ("children of light"). "Sons of day" does not have any parallel in the contemporary literature; still, it does convey the same idea, since throughout this passage light/day is opposed to darkness/night. It could be the case that night and darkness are meant to evoke two different ideas and so likewise light and day signify separate concepts; thus, for Richard, "night and day refer more particularly to the end-time while darkness and light focus on the present struggle within Christian lives of commitment."[148] Likewise, Weima argues that "sons of light" and "sons of day" are not synonymous because "sons of light" deals solely with moral status while "sons of day" has an additional "eschatological sense of referring to the coming day of the Lord."[149] However, based on the use in 1QM, it is clear that "sons of light" can have an eschatological meaning as well. Instead, the terms are used

[147] The "sons of" construction is a Hebraism. BDF §162(6). BDAG, s.v. "υἱός," 2cβ.
[148] Richard, *Thessalonians*, 253.
[149] Weima, *Thessalonians*, 356. See also Plevnik, "1 Thess 5,1-11," 50.

synonymously to emphasise the point. These designations help to link identity and behaviour. Since believers belong to the light and to the day, they are exhorted to behave accordingly. This is an important part of the eschatological understanding of 1 Thessalonians because it shows the impact of such thought on practical, daily behaviour.[150]

First Thessalonians 5:6-7 further demonstrates the difference between believers and nonbelievers. There is an interesting parallel between 5:6 and 4:13, though it is not exact: in each case there is a contrast between the behaviour of believers and that of οἱ λοιποί. In 5:6, all believers are exhorted to remain watchful and sober in contrast to the rest who sleep. This again distinguishes the community from the outsiders, and further confirms the conclusion above that 1 Thess 4:13 prohibits the behaviour of grief, which was characteristic of those outside the community. Verse 7 further expounds on the night/darkness imagery, describing certain behaviour that belongs to the night: sleeping and drinking. This is in opposition to the behaviour of believers described in 5:6. There is also a contrast between 5:7 and 5:8. In 5:7, there is one category of people who sleep and get drunk. In contrast, 5:8 concerns ἡμεῖς, those who are of the day and remain sober. Throughout the passage, the audience is contrasted with those who are characterised by being asleep and drunk. These contrasts are fundamental to the audience's identity, and that identity is grounded in their eschatological fate.

[150] Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 175 argues that the apocalyptic language of 1 Thessalonians "reinforces the uniqueness and cohesion of the community. And that in turn produces a disposition, if the admonitions are heeded, to act in a way appropriate to the community's well-being."

A Confused Metaphor

There is a different word used for "sleep" in this chapter (καθεύδω) than in 4:13-15 (κοιμάω), appearing in verses 6, 7, and 10. Καθεύδω can have three possible connotations—a literal reference to sleep, a figurative reference to death, or a figurative reference to indifference.[151] The third meaning seems most appropriate in this passage; it is not that believers are never to literally sleep, but rather that they are to remain aware and disciplined in light of the approaching day of the Lord and their identity as those who belong to the day. Believers are positively characterised with γρηγορέω and νήφω. Γρηγορέω can have three meanings: literally "to be awake/watchful," figuratively "to be in constant readiness, on the alert," and figuratively "to be alive."[152] The same verb is used in the eschatological discourses of Mark 13:34-37 and Matt 24:42-44 and is related to the *parousia*. In the current passage it has the same figurative sense of "to keep watch/be ready." Νήφω can mean "to be well-balanced, self-controlled" or "to be sober."[153] Considering the imagery of drunkenness in the following verse, translating νήφωμεν here as "let us be sober" fits well with the themes of the passage.

The second part of 5:10 is a cause of confusion. As in 5:6-7, καθεύδω occurs instead of κοιμάω. The confusion comes from the seeming inconsistency between the use of καθεύδω in 5:6-7 and the use in 5:10. In 5:6-7, those who are sleeping are the ones identified as in darkness and the ones upon whom the day of the Lord has a disastrous effect. This would imply that "those sleeping" is equivalent to nonbelievers. If this were the

[151] BDAG, s.v. "καθεύδω."
[152] BDAG, s.v. "γρηγορέω."
[153] BDAG, s.v. "νήφω."

interpretation, then it would mean that both groups—believers and nonbelievers—will be with the Lord Jesus, giving the passage a universalistic meaning. Yet, such an interpretation ignores the fundamental dualism of the passage. There is a real divide in identity between believers and nonbelievers, and because of that difference in identity there is also a difference in eschatological fate. Another interpretive option is that the contrast between καθεύδω and γρηγορέω that was present in 5:6 continues here. This would lead to the conclusion that it does not actually matter whether one keeps watch or not, as regardless all people will be with the Lord. Edgar argues for this interpretation due to the fact that γρηγορέω is never used for the meaning "to be alive," and so the contrast is not between living believers and dead believers.[154] However, such an interpretation is at odds with the point throughout this passage. The moral imperatives do have force and do matter, and so it cannot be the intention of 5:10 to indicate that it does not matter how the Thessalonians behave; indeed, that would undermine the exhortations throughout the letter. While all these explanations seek to make sense of the use of both καθεύδω and γρηγορέω in a consistent manner, none ultimately fit within the context of the passage. Though καθεύδω rarely refers to death in the New Testament or Greek Jewish scriptures, it can have this meaning (e.g. Dan 12:2).[155] Given that death was just discussed in chapter 4, it is most likely that the same meaning is in mind in 5:10, while using the vocabulary of 5:6-7. It is best to keep γρηγορέω translated as "keep watch" rather than "are alive," for the point in this

[154] Thomas R. Edgar, "The Meaning of 'Sleep' in 1 Thessalonians 5:10," *JETS* 22 (1979): 345-349, 349. See also Markus Lautenschlager, "Εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν: Zunn Verhältnis von Heiligung und Heil in 1 Thess 5,10," *ZNW* 81 (1990): 39-59.
[155] BDAG, s.v. "καθεύδω," 3. Cf. Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 295.

section is that if one has not died then one is to continue actively to keep watch.[156] While those who continue to keep watch are indeed alive, what really matters is that they are keeping watch. Thus, 1 Thessalonians is not inconsistent in its use of καθεύδω.

Salvation in 1 Thessalonians

In 5:8 the focus moves from the description of the behaviour of "those in the night" back to "those of the day," believers. The aorist participle, ἐνδυσάμενοι, indicates that they have already put on the armour described here.[157] This is not an exhortation to place this metaphorical armour upon themselves, but instead to recognise that they already have it and thus should remain prepared. It is another affirmation of their identity—they belong to the day, and because of this they are clothed for battle. This verse is likely based on Isaiah 59:17:[158]

[156] This is similar to Richard's translation, *Thessalonians*, 257: "whether we are alert (and waiting for the Lord's day) or whether we are asleep (in the dust of the earth) we live together with him." This translation also answers Lautenschlager's objection that γρηγορεῖν is never documented with the meaning "to be alive," ("Zunn Verhältnis," 42).

[157] Witherington, *Thessalonians*, 150-151, argues that the participle could be an exhortation to action. Joseph Yong-Sik Ahn, "The Parousia in Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians, the Corinthians, and the Romans, in relation to its Old Testament-Judaic Background" (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1989), 215, argues similarly that it "is a call to get their armor back on; to those who have already put this armor on, this is a call to manifest their faith, love and hope more and more." However, the main exhortation of this verse is "be sober," which they are able to do because *in the past* they already put on the armour that will enable them to keep watch. The focus is on their identity as those who are clothed in armour, and their resultant behaviour.

[158] Richard, *Thessalonians*, 255, argues that the imagery is due to "paraenetic tradition which made use of armor imagery precisely because life itself and particularly the end-time struggle were seen as a contest between the spheres of light and darkness or good and evil." However, the parallel with the text in Isaiah is too close to be unintentional.

Isa 59:17	**1 Thess 5:8**
ἐνεδύσατο δικαιοσύνην ὡς θώρακα he put on righteousness as a breastplate	ἐνδυσάμενοι θώρακα πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης having put on the breastplate of faith and love
καὶ περιέθετο περικεφαλαίαν σωτηρίου ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς and he placed a helmet of salvation on his head	καὶ περικεφαλαίαν ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας and the helmet of the hope of salvation

The only difference is that there are three elements condensed into two pieces of armour, so it is not a perfect match. The author could have added in an extra piece of armour but it is clear that he wanted to maintain the connection with Isa 59:17. This verse introduces the idea of salvation [*σωτηρία*]—the difference between those in the dark and those in the light is that the latter will receive salvation and the former will receive wrath. The content of the audience's faith is in this hope of salvation. They already have the hope and are waiting for the fulfilment of it; thus, salvation is in the future. Importantly, the helmet and breastplate are protective pieces of armour that cover the person and prevent injury. There is no mention of weapons such as a sword.[159] Boring notes that "in contrast to Qumran, such armor is not gearing up for participation in the final eschatological battle, for this battle is already won, and believers have been armor-clad by its results from the time of their conversion."[160]

This idea of salvation is further explained in 5:9, which concerns the theme of appointment or election. This verse modifies the previous verse—the reason they have put

[159] Cf. Eph 6:11-17, where the armour imagery has been expanded and modified. In particular, in the Ephesians passage there is "the helmet of salvation" (περικεφαλαίαν τοῦ σωτηρίου) rather than "the helmet of the *hope* of salvation" (περικεφαλαίαν ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας).
[160] Boring, *Thessalonians*, 184.

on the spiritual armour is because God appointed (ἔθετο) them for salvation. Thus, they cover themselves with the traits that define a believer: faith, hope, and love. This verse calls to mind 1 Thess 1:4, where the believers' ἐκλογήν ("election") is said to be well-known. The concept of election is also present in 1 Thess 2:12, 4:7, and 5:24. This implies that the theme is significant for the understanding of salvation in 1 Thessalonians. Believers are not destined for ὀργή ("wrath"). The reference to ὀργή recalls 1:10 and 2:16. Ὀργή is only modified in 1:10, where it is shown to be future. In 1:10, the Thessalonian believers are to await Jesus, "who saves us from the coming wrath." It is not immediately clear *whose* wrath it is; however, the surrounding context of each section clarifies that this is God's eschatological wrath, which will come upon unbelievers.[161] First Thessalonians 5:9 defines salvation as escape from this wrath, just as previously in 1:10. This means that unlike those in 5:3, believers will escape the terrible consequences of the day of the Lord. Their appointment is to the περιποίησις of salvation. Περιποίησις can mean "the experience of security" (saving), "the experience of an event of acquisition" (gaining, obtaining), or "that which is acquired" (possessing, possession).[162] In this verse it means "the obtaining of salvation," which further emphasises the future nature of the believers' salvation.[163]

The closest 1 Thessalonians comes to explaining the significance of Christ's death is in 5:9-10 where "our Lord Jesus Christ" is described as the one "who died for us." Throughout 1 Thessalonians, the focus has been on hope and waiting rather than on the

[161] See the Excursus above.
[162] BDAG, s.v. "περιποίησις."
[163] BDAG, s.v. "περιποίησις," 2. See also Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 298-299; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 368.

past. If 1 Thessalonians is by Paul, it could be that he does not have to develop an extended explanation of justification until later in his ministry because he does not run into such problems until he writes later epistles, such as Galatians and Romans. On the other hand, the lack of attention to this theme could be indicative of a non-Pauline author who is not concerned with the topic. Though it is not a fully developed concept in this letter, it is obvious that Christ died on behalf of believers; it is efficacious in some sense, though no further details are given. What is made clear is that the result of Christ's death is that believers will be united with him.

It is apparent that 1 Thessalonians considers salvation an eschatological occurrence. As demonstrated in 5:9, part of the believers' salvation is that they are spared the eschatological wrath, which was in focus in 5:2-3. Their identity determines their fate: because they belong to the day, they will not be negatively affected by "the day of the Lord," but rather will receive salvation. There is thus a mix of present and future focus in the understanding of salvation. On the one hand, the believers have already been chosen and their fate is secure. On the other hand, their possession of salvation has not yet occurred and ultimate rescue from eschatological wrath is still in the future.

In 5:1-11 the topic of the day of the Lord is addressed, specifically in relation to the wrath that is coming for nonbelievers. Those who currently trust in the power of the empire, believing themselves to be secure, will be destroyed by God's wrath in the end. This will happen suddenly, surprising those who are not prepared for that day. In contrast, believers will be rescued from this outpouring of wrath; this makes salvation a future occurrence,

though they have already been chosen by God for this fate. Thus, in this passage two eschatological fates are contrasted. This assures the audience that not only will those who oppose them be overcome by wrath in the end, but also both they and their dead community members will be rescued from this wrath and united together with Christ. Because this is their ultimate fate, believers should currently keep watch, behaving in a manner befitting their identity as those who will be saved, prepared for the arrival of their Lord.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-24

As in 3:13, in these verses there is a wish for the audience to be kept blameless at the *parousia*, again indicating the need for holiness to be in Jesus's presence. This has been a repeated theme throughout the letter. However, they are not commanded to make themselves blameless. Rather, it is made clear that God himself is the one who sanctifies them, making them worthy to stand in the divine presence. The future indicative of 5:24 highlights both the certainty of God's preservation of the believers and also emphasises the future occurrence of this preservation. This verse again connects the topics of holiness and the *parousia* and concludes the letter with a summary of its two main themes. Blameless living is thus intimately connected to the eschatological teachings throughout this letter—the difference in this passage is that the audience is given a guarantee that God himself will make them holy and ready for that day.

CONCLUSION

Though eschatology is not the sole topic of 1 Thessalonians, it certainly permeates the entire letter. The multiple short eschatological statements (1:9-10, 2:13-16, 2:19-20, 3:13, 5:23-24) together with the longer sections (4:13-18, 5:1-11) provide a foundation for the exhortation throughout the letter by inculcating an eschatological perspective in the audience.[164] Because God's enemies face wrath in the future, the audience does not need to fear them in the present and can endure their present suffering; because the audience is destined to be in Jesus's presence in the future, they must pursue moral purity in the present. The author also provides further information about what will happen in the end—but only insofar as he might relieve their grief. The various pieces of eschatological thought in this letter can be synthesised under five main categories: terminology, timing, eschatological fates, agency, and circumstances for writing.

The first obvious element of eschatology in this letter is the use of various terms to describe the eschatological event. In this letter, that day is described in several different ways, and there are some noticeable differences from the other Pauline letters. The greatest number of occurrences of the term *parousia* in the Pauline corpus is in 1 Thessalonians, appearing four times in this short letter. The only other occurrences of *parousia* with the same eschatological emphasis in the Pauline corpus are in 1 Cor 15:23 and 2 Thess 2:1, 8. Instead, Paul's other letters more often tend to use "the day of the/our Lord [Jesus]" when describing Jesus's eschatological visitation (1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14). However, it appears

[164] As Selby, "'Blameless at His Coming,'" 406, argues these passages "function to establish a framework in which the Thessalonians are invited to see their lives and circumstances—a framework which has serious ethical and communal implications."

that 1 Thessalonians has distinguished between the *parousia* and the day of the Lord in order to differentiate the fates of believers and unbelievers, since throughout 1 Thessalonians the *parousia* is only spoken of in relation to believers. On the other hand, the day of the Lord is said to affect both believers and nonbelievers, though nonbelievers face destruction on that day (5:3). It is clear from the analysis that the coming of Jesus is connected with escape from wrath and that day of the Lord is specifically used in relation to the outpouring of that wrath. Yet, both the *parousia* and the day of the Lord refer to the same moment, for there is a "referential shift" in 1 Thessalonians in which the "day of YHWH" of the Jewish scriptures has now become the "day of the Lord Jesus."[165] Because of this use of tradition, there are also multiple features that 1 Thessalonians shares with the biblical prophets' "day of YHWH," particularly the post-exilic prophetic focus on the eschatological destruction of God's enemies and the preservation of God's people. Additionally, the description of the *parousia* in 4:13-18 is influenced by apocalyptic imagery, but 1 Thessalonians also uses terms that would have been familiar to the audience, such as *parousia* and ἀπάντησις. By combining these different aspects, this passage is better able to help the audience imagine their future along with the fate of their dead community members. The author combines the images available to him in order to communicate the majesty of Jesus's coming and to encourage the community to persevere and continue waiting expectantly.

Throughout this letter, reference is repeatedly made to the future *parousia*, though it is never precisely clarified when that event will occur. Presumably by the reference to

[165] So Kreitzer, *Jesus and God*, 129.

"we who remain at the *parousia*" (4:15), the author assumes he and his audience will be alive for it, though this is qualified by the statement in 5:10: "whether we keep watch or sleep, we may live with him." This leaves the timing ambiguous. The letter does emphasise how suddenly the day of the Lord will arrive, but it tells believers that it should not overtake them (5:4) if they are prepared and "keep watch" (5:6). There is no reference to other events that must happen before Jesus returns; in the meantime, believers are to "live quietly" and "work with [their] hands" (4:11). At no point in this letter is there a clear indication of how long they will have to wait for the *parousia*, though the emphasis on waiting (1:10) and keeping watch (5:6) would indicate it is expected within their lifetimes.

There is an implicit dualism between those who "turn to serve the living and true God" (1:9) and those who do not, and this is especially highlighted in their different eschatological fates, with the first group promised they will "be with the Lord forever" (4:17; 5:10) and the second group destroyed on the day of the Lord (5:3). One's response to God determines one's eschatological fate. This is clearly demonstrated in 2:13-16, where the particular Jews who opposed God by killing Jesus and persecuting the churches in Judea are now said to be recipients of God's wrath. They are presented as a clear contrast to the Thessalonians' response to God in 1:6-10. Not only did they receive the word of God even in the midst of affliction, but they also spread it throughout the surrounding regions; this is completely opposite to the action of the particular Jews who "prevent [the missionaries] from speaking to the gentiles so that they might be saved" (2:16). The believers are further reminded that they have been appointed by God "for the obtaining of salvation" not for wrath (5:9), which designates salvation as a future occurrence—they obtain salvation at

the *parousia*, when Jesus comes and rescues them from wrath (1:10). However, there is a present anticipation of this salvation as well, for 1 Thessalonians emphasises that believers have already been "chosen" (1:6) to receive and obey the gospel, and that involves sanctification (4:3) in the present so that they can stand blameless before God when Jesus comes (3:13; 5:23). So, 1 Thessalonians uses their eschatological fate to comfort them but also to influence their present behaviour.

On a first reading, Jesus seems to be the sole agent of salvation in 1 Thessalonians. In 1:10, he is clearly portrayed as the rescuer, saving believers from God's wrath. So, is Jesus then working against God? It might seem that God's and Jesus's actions are in conflict with each other, with God pouring out his wrath and Jesus saving believers from that wrath. However, God is also an agent of salvation as he is the one who "brings" dead believers with Jesus at the *parousia* (4:14). God is also the one who will sanctify his people, keeping them blameless (5:23) and he selects people for salvation (5:9). At the same time, this salvation is accomplished *through* (διά) Jesus. Jesus is also involved in judgment for he is called the "avenger" in 4:6, and in 2:19 he receives testimony as the judge of Paul's ministry at the end. Furthermore, God and Jesus together are involved in judgment in 3:13, though their roles here are ambiguous.[166] This becomes clearer with the description of the day of the Lord, for—since it is to be equated with the *parousia*—this is the moment that God's wrath comes upon unbelievers through Jesus. Thus, when Jesus comes in his *parousia* he brings

[166] While I agree with Konradt, *Gericht und Gemeinde*, 187, 524-526, that there are no formal universal judgment scenes in 1 Thessalonians, he is wrong to argue there is no idea of judgment for believers here whatsoever. The idea that believers need to be found blameless at the *parousia* would indicate that there is some sort of judgment that happens to determine between the blameless and those who will receive wrath. Cf. Selby, "'Blameless at His Coming,'" 397, 409-410.

both wrath and rescue. In short, God and Jesus are involved in both salvation and judgment in 1 Thessalonians.[167] This is because Jesus acts as God's eschatological agent throughout the letter. God is the one directing the events, but Jesus accomplishes God's purposes.

Though it is difficult to establish the situation of the audience with complete certainty, especially if we bracket the identity of the author, the logic of the arguments in the letter do give us some help. The main problem for the community is their grief over dead community members because of some confusion over the timing of the resurrection of the dead in relation to the *parousia*. It seems that they have misunderstood previous eschatological teaching to mean those who have died will be at some sort of disadvantage in the end by missing out on the *parousia*. To combat this misunderstanding, 1 Thessalonians clarifies that the dead will not miss out on being united with the Lord in his *parousia* but will instead be resurrected as the first result of the *parousia*. Only after this resurrection will all believers be caught up together and united with Jesus. Furthermore, because the audience is apparently facing conflict with their neighbours (1:6; 2:14) 1 Thessalonians confirms them in their identity as "insiders" by contrasting them throughout with those who "do not know God" and who will ultimately face his wrath.

Finally, in addition to these five categories, I observed that the eschatological material of 1 Thessalonians has parallels with several other early Christian texts. Most notably, 1 Thessalonians appears to draw on early tradition that is paralleled in Mark 13, Matt 24, Luke 12, and Luke 21. In both Matt 24 and Luke 12, the eschatological event is

[167] Kreitzer, *Jesus and God*, 106, notes that this same conceptual overlap is found in the *Similitudes of Enoch* where both God (1 En. 47:3; 60:1-3) and his agent (the "Elect One" or "Son of Man"; 1 En. 45:3-6; 51:3; 55:4; 61:8; 62:2-5; 69:29) are said to sit on the throne of judgment.

compared to the unexpected arrival of a thief, followed by an exhortation to watchfulness. This same pattern is present in 1 Thess 5. Additionally, the images of clouds, trumpets, and angels in 1 Thess 4 also appear in Matt 24 accompanying the arrival of the son of man (clouds and angels also appear in Mark 13). In both Matt 24 and Mark 13 there is also a gathering of the elect to the son of man, without a clear indication of where they go from there. This tentative connection deserves greater treatment than could be attempted in the current chapter and will be dealt with thoroughly in chapter 4.

In conclusion, in chapter 1 I have presented a close examination of the eschatological passages in 1 Thessalonians. Through this analysis I determined that while 1 Thessalonians uses different terminology (*parousia*, day of the Lord), it presents one eschatological moment in which God's enemies are destroyed but God's people are rescued by Jesus. We have also seen that the roles of Jesus and God are not completely delineated, as both are involved in salvation and in judgment. Furthermore, we have seen that this eschatological day will surprise nonbelievers but believers are expected to be ready for it. While 1 Thessalonians does not provide information about *when* this day will happen, it does imply that the author expects to be alive for it (4:17). Finally, there are three reasons the author communicates eschatological information; the first is to exhort his audience to moral purity, the second is to console them in their grief over the death of certain community members, and the third is to put their suffering into perspective. In each case he points to their eschatological fate: they will be with the Lord forever in the end.

CHAPTER 2: THE ESCHATOLOGY OF 2 THESSALONIANS

Second Thessalonians remains one of the most intriguing and least understood books of the New Testament. It is rarely discussed at any length, if at all, in introductions or theologies of Paul. One reason 2 Thessalonians is often marginalised is because of uncertainty about its authorship, which is an on-going debate.[1] As discussed in the introduction above, judgment on authorship will be reserved for chapter 5, so only the briefest of comments can be made on the background of the epistle currently. If 2 Thessalonians was written by Paul, it was written sometime in the 40s or early 50s, likely shortly after 1 Thessalonians.[2] If not by Paul, the latest 2 Thessalonians could have been written is the end of the first century or beginning of the second century, since some of the apostolic fathers seem to be aware of it.[3]

If 2 Thessalonians is by Paul, the audience is likely the same as in 1 Thessalonians, though a minority of scholars have proposed different audiences for the two letters.[4] If 2 Thessalonians is pseudonymous, little can probably be discovered about the audience beyond what is present in the letter, especially if it is intended as a general tract rather than

[1] Campbell, *Framing Paul*, 190-253 has argued the Thessalonian correspondence should be located in the early 40s. Most scholars, however, place 1 Thessalonians in 50 or 51 and 2 Thessalonians, if authentic, a matter of weeks or months afterwards.

[2] The theory of reversed order will be examined in chapter 5.

[3] Did. 12.3-5 seems to allude to 2 Thess 3:6-12. Pol. *Phil*. 11:3-4 possibly alludes to 2 Thess 1:4 and 3:15. Later church fathers also regarded 2 Thessalonians as a genuine letter of Paul. Justin Martyr mentions the "man of sin" in *Dial.* 32, an allusion to 2 Thess 2:3. Likewise, in *Dial*. 110 Justin speaks of how Christ will come "when the man of apostasy, who speaks strange things against the Most High, shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against us the Christians," a clear reference to 2 Thess 2:3-12. Irenaeus, *Haer*. 3.7.2 quotes 2 Thess 2:8-9 and Tertullian, *Res*. 24 quotes 2 Thess 2:1-10; in both cases Paul is identified as the author. Marcion included the epistle in his canon.

[4] These theories will be examined in chapter 5.

addressing a specific solution, in which case the audience is largely invented. What is clear from the letter is that the author is concerned with a false eschatological view circulating, summed up in 2:2 "the day of the Lord has come." The main motive of the letter is to address this claim, though it also addresses the issue of persecution by nonbelievers and warns against those in the community who are disorderly—these could either be real pastoral issues or simply expansions on themes present in 1 Thessalonians.

Since eschatology is the main theme of this letter, the majority of 2 Thessalonians will have to be treated in this chapter. The two main passages examined are 2 Thess 1:3-12 and 2:1-12. These two passages contain eschatological topics such as the *parousia*, the day of the Lord, and final judgment, along with the mysterious figures of "the man of lawlessness" (2:3: ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας; 2:8 ὁ ἄνομος "the lawless one") and "the restrainer" (2:6*:* τὸ κατέχον/2:7: ὁ κατέχων). Additionally, I examine 2 Thess 3:6-15 as many scholars regard the "disorderly" (ἀτάκτως) in the congregation as motivated by eschatological beliefs.[5] This all combines into fertile ground for a discussion of the eschatology of 2 Thessalonians.

[5] See Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 176; Robert Jewett, "Tenement Churches and Communal Meals in the Early Church: The Implications of a Form-Critical Analysis of 2 Thessalonians 3:10," *BR* 38 (1993): 23-43. M. J. J. Menken, "Paradise Regained or Still Lost? Eschatology and Disorderly Behaviour in 2 Thessalonians," *NTS* 38 (1992): 271-289; Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 528.

The first block of eschatological material in 2 Thessalonians occurs in the thanksgiving section of 1:3-12, in particular in verses 5-12. The long, continuous sentence of 1:5-10 makes it at times difficult to separate out the different elements of the picture described here. However, it is clear that this section introduces the audience to one of the main topics of the letter: eschatological judgment. The audience is understood to be suffering, as made apparent by 1:4. Θλῖψις ["trial"] and διωγμός ["persecution"] are synonymous in this verse; they cover all the possible realms of suffering which the audience is experiencing.[6] This situation influences the aim of the author—he seeks to reassure them that their suffering will not go unavenged and indeed will lead to their being considered worthy of the kingdom of God.

God's Righteous Judgment

In this passage the topic of judgment figures prominently, for it describes God's righteous judgment and how it affects those within and outside of the believing community. Marshall argues that the judgment here does not refer to eschatological judgment, as the word used is κρίσις, and elsewhere in the Pauline corpus κρίμα is used to denote eschatological judgment (e.g. Rom 2:3); so, in this verse "rather the thought is of God's present process of judgment on his people which has the aim of judging them to be worthy of the kingdom."[7]

[6] I agree with Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica*, 208-217 against Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 48 that the afflictions are external rather than psychological.

[7] Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 173. See also Légasse, *Thessaloniciens*, 364-365.

However, elsewhere in the New Testament κρίσις does denote eschatological judgment (e.g. Matt 10:15; John 5:29; 2 Pet 3:7; 1 John 4:17). Furthermore, within the Pauline epistles Rom 2:5 contains a similar description of God's righteous judgment (δικαιοκρισία). In Rom 2:5, Paul writes that there will be a "day of wrath" (ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς) when the revelation (ἀποκαλύψεως) of this judgment occurs, with God repaying each person according to their deeds (Rom 2:6). So, in Romans this righteous judgment occurs in the future. Likewise, in 2 Thessalonians judgment is connected with the future revelation of the Lord Jesus. The "paying back" of 1:6 occurs "in the revelation of the Lord Jesus" (1:7). Therefore, throughout this passage judgment should be understood as occurring in the future, even if it is already anticipated in the present.

Following the thanksgiving for the audience's perseverance through their afflictions, 1:5 states: ἔνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ ("evidence of the righteous judgment of God"). The word ἔνδειγμα ("evidence," "proof") is a *hapax* in the New Testament, though other forms of δείκνυμι are more common, as is the related ἔνδειξις.[8] If ἔνδειγμα is to be understood as a nominative, an implied relative clause ὅ ἐστιν ["this is"] needs to be supplied for a smooth translation.[9] On the other hand, ἔνδειγμα could be in the accusative and in apposition to something previously mentioned. In either case, it is unclear precisely what ἔνδειγμα refers to. Most commentators attempt to connect ἔνδειγμα back to the previous verses, in which case there are two main options.[10] In the first place,

[8] BDAG, s.vv. "ἔνδειγμα," "ἐνδείκνυμι," "ἔνδειξις." Cf. Phil 1:28; Rom 3:25, 26; 2 Cor 8:24.
[9] BDF §480(6).
[10] Both Witherington, *Thessalonians*, 192 and Weima, *Thessalonians*, 459 understand ἔνδειγμα as pointing forward to 1:6. However, this interpretation does not clarify how this would be a present

this verse could be claiming the audience's endurance and their faith are the proof of God's righteous judgment; thus, ἔνδειγμα would refer to τῆς ὑπομονῆς ὑμῶν καὶ πίστεως in 1:4.[11] In Phil 1:28 Paul makes a similar statement: ἥτις ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς ἔνδειξις ἀπωλείας, ὑμῶν δὲ σωτηρίας, καὶ τοῦτο ἀπὸ θεοῦ ("which is evidence to them of destruction, but of salvation for you, and this from God"). In that passage, the church's perseverance in suffering is regarded as ἔνδειξις ἀπωλείας ("evidence of destruction") for the opponents, while it is a sign of salvation for the church. The word used in Philippians is ἔνδειξις, not ἔνδειγμα as in 2 Thessalonians; however, they are related terms.[12] Yet, these passages are not exact parallels, for in Phil 1:28 the proof communicates the church's salvation while in 2 Thess 1:5 the evidence is about God's righteous judgment. In Phil 1:28, it is obvious that the evidence relates to the church's perseverance; in 2 Thess 1:5 the connection is unclear. Furthermore, in 1:5 suffering is explicitly linked with the kingdom of God, whereas perseverance is not mentioned again.[13]

Noting this connection with suffering in 1:5, some argue that ἔνδειγμα refers back to the afflictions and persecutions that the audience is currently experiencing.[14] In this

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sign for the audience of God's judgment, nor how it relates to their being considered worthy in the end. The best options remain either the audience's perseverance or the suffering itself.

[11] Lars Hartman, "The Eschatology of 2 Thessalonians as Included in a Communication," in *Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. Collins, 470-485, 474; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 304-305; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 394.

[12] Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, 619; Tobias Nicklas, "Intertextuality—Christology—Pseudepigraphy: The Impact of Old Testament Allusions in 2 Thess 1:5-10," in *The Scriptures of Israel in Jewish and Christian Tradition: Essays in Honour of Maarten J. J. Menken*, ed. Bart J. Koet, Steve Moyise, and Joseph Verheyden (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 227-238, 229-230n12.

[13] So Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 149: "A significant problem for this position is the subsequent context, in which the theme of perseverance is striking only by its absence."

[14] Trilling, *zweite Brief*, 49; Légasse, *Thessaloniciens*, 364; Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 85-86; Jouette M. Bassler, "The Enigmatic Sign: 2 Thessalonians 1:5," *CBQ* 46 (1984): 496-510; Richard,

interpretation, it is the trials themselves, not the believers' response to these trials, that serve as a sign of God's righteous judgment. One version of this interpretation focuses on a supposed *Leidenstheologie* ("theology of suffering").[15] *Leidenstheologie* is often defined with reference to the classical formulation of Rabbi Aqiba:

> [God] follows up meticulously in every small matter involving the righteous, exacting a penalty from them for every last evil deed that they have done in this world, in order to give them abundant blessings to them and a great reward in the world to come. He gives an abundant blessing to the wicked and gives them a generous reward for the least of the religious duties that they have carried out in this world, in order to exact a full and just penalty from them in the world to come.[16]

The emphasis in *Leidenstheologie* interpretations is that the righteous undergo suffering in the present so that they escape punishment in the end. Thus, in this interpretation, the suffering of the audience is what makes them worthy of the kingdom of God because there is no more punishment that they have to undergo. Jouette Bassler, for example, argues, "The author, borrowing ideas from contemporary *Leidenstheologie*, argues that the very afflictions that would seem to undercut confidence in God's justice are in truth the *sure sign of it*."[17] The material from Gen. Rab. is far too late to be used as proof for the presence of *Leidenstheologie* at the time of the New Testament writings. However, there are other texts contemporaneous with the New Testament that attest to a similar theology.

In certain Second Temple texts, trials and persecutions are seen to have value in the present as they enable the righteous to escape all punishment in the end. For this

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Thessalonians, 316-317; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 149-150; Crüsemann, *Pseudepigraphal Letters*, 257.

[15] Wolfgang Wichmann, *Die Leidenstheologie: Eine Form der Leidensdeutung im Spätjudentum* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1930), first articulated the idea of *Leidenstheologie* in 2 Thessalonians.

[16] Gen. Rab. 33:1 (on Gen 8:1) (Neusner). Cf. Wichmann, *Leidenstheologie*, 10-11.

[17] Bassler, "Enigmatic Sign," 509.

reason, the suffering is viewed as punishment—merciful punishment because God does not wait until the end to punish his people as he will the nations—but punishment nonetheless. Both 2 Baruch and 2 Maccabees contain similar themes. In 2 Bar. 78:5-6 it says:

> His judgment which He has decreed against you that you should be carried away captive—for what you have suffered is disproportionate to what you have done—in order that, at the last times, you may be found worthy of your fathers. Therefore, if you consider that you have now suffered those things for your good, that you may not finally be condemned and tormented, then you will receive eternal hope.[18]

Present suffering is here linked with rescue from future condemnation. In 2 Macc 6:12-16, the *Leidenstheologie* theme is even more prominent:

> The punishments are not for the destruction but for the discipline of our people. In fact, it is a sign [σημεῖόν] of great kindness not to let the impious alone for long, but to punish them immediately. For in the case of the other nations the master waits patiently to punish them until they have reached the completion of their sins; but he does not in this way judge us, in order that he may not take vengeance on us afterward when our sins have reached their height. Therefore he never withdraws his mercy from us. While he disciplines us with calamities, he does not forsake his own people.

In this text, the evidence of God's mercy is found in the fact that he punishes or disciplines the Israelites for their sins now, thereby allowing them to escape punishment in the end. Furthermore, it is the punishment itself that is viewed as the sign of God's mercy. These texts give evidence for aspects of *Leidenstheologie*—though not necessarily fully developed—present in Jewish thought by the end of the first century.

This remains an obscure and difficult verse, but it is probably best to read it as a version of *Leidenstheologie* given the emphasis on purificatory suffering in Second Temple texts and the connection of suffering with the kingdom in 2 Thess 1:5. Furthermore, the fact

[18] OTP 1:648.

that the audience will be "considered worthy" of the kingdom of God in the end indicates the need for purification ahead of this. This also fits with other apocalyptic understandings of suffering before the end. In Dan 11:32-35, for example, some of the people of God are said to suffer in various ways before the end "so that they may be refined, purified, and cleansed, until the time of the end" (Dan 11:35; cf. 12:10). The meaning, then, of 1:5 is that "their persecutions are a sign of God's future just judgment, a guarantee that those persecuted would be counted worthy of the kingdom, since persecution functioned to purify God's people in preparation for the kingdom."[19] As will be discussed below, the continued suffering likely caused confusion and distress for the audience in light of the claim that the day of the Lord had come (2:2), raising questions about God's justice. Thus, they needed assurance that their continued suffering was not a sign of injustice, but rather a sign of the future just judgment of God which would reverse the situations of the afflicters and the afflicted. Ultimately, whatever the interpretation of ἔνδειγμα, the point here is that the audience can trust that their current suffering will be vindicated when Jesus returns in judgment.

Punishment

The idea of punishment is present throughout this chapter, and it is connected with God's righteous judgment. In 1:5 it is claimed that those who have afflicted the Thessalonians will be paid back with affliction. Ἀνταποδίδωμι ("repay") can be used in either a context of

[19] Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 152.

reward or of punishment or revenge.[20] In Luke 14:14, for example, the verb is used in a positive context in which a reward will be received on judgment day. In 1 Thess 3:9, ἀνταποδοῦναι is also used in a positive setting. Here, however, the repayment is negative. The punishment matches the offense; this exact reciprocity is reminiscent of the *lex talionis*. However, there is also a positive sense to this repayment, as the afflicted Thessalonians will be repaid with rest. In this verse, punishment seems to be reserved solely for those who have been persecuting the Thessalonians. In 1:8, however, the punishment is extended more broadly to cover all unbelievers. The reverse of this punishment is the ἄνεσις ("relief," rest")[21] which God "pays back" to the afflicted Thessalonians. In 2 Cor 2:13, 7:5, and 8:13 there is a similar contrast between ἄνεσις and θλῖψις. In 2 Corinthians, the relief is spoken of as present, while the context in 2 Thessalonians gives it a future, eschatological sense. This relief occurs in the day of the Lord. This is not a reward for the suffering endured, but rather deliverance from it, and it will be given to them in the future, at the same time as the afflicters receive their punishment.

In his ἀποκάλυψις, Jesus gives ἐκδίκησις, as described in 1:8. Ἐκδίκησις could mean simply refer to the giving of justice, as it does in Luke 18:7. Likewise, it can refer to punishment without a vindictive sense. Yet, it usually has a more retributive meaning, such as "vengeance."[22] For example, Rom 12:19: "Never avenge [ἐκδικοῦντες] yourselves, beloved, but leave room for the wrath, for it is written, 'Vengeance [ἐκδίκησις] is mine, I will repay

[20] BDAG, s.v. "ἀνταποδίδωμι."
[21] BDAG, s.v. "ἄνεσις."
[22] BDAG, s.v. "ἐκδίκησις."

[ἀνταποδώσω],' says the Lord." The use of ἐκδίκησις in 2 Thess 1:8 is similar to Rom 12:19. For example, ἀνταποδοῦναι appears in 1:6, so the idea of "paying back" is already present in the passage, though this is specific to those who are persecuting the Thessalonians. On the other hand, unlike Rom 12:19, there is not an idea of seeking vengeance in 1:8. The people who will receive ἐκδίκησις are "those who do not know God" and "those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus." They are in the wrong, and they will incur a penalty for this. Thus, "punishment" is the appropriate translation for this use of ἐκδίκησις. Some commentators see τοῖς μὴ εἰδόσιν θεὸν ("those who do not know God") and τοῖς μὴ ὑπακούουσιν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ("those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus") as two separate groups.[23] In this interpretation, the first group is identified as gentiles and the second as Jews. The reasons for this interpretation lie in the typical designation of gentiles in the Jewish scriptures as "those who do not know God," as in Jer 10:25 ("Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not know you [ἔθνη τὰ μὴ εἰδότα σε]").[24] This is also how gentiles are described in 1 Thess 4:5: τὰ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ εἰδότα τὸν θεόν. Furthermore, it is argued, the Jews are often identified as those who do not obey, as in Rom 10:16: ὑπήκουσαν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ ("they [the Jews] did not obey the gospel").[25] On the other hand, "obedience" in Paul's letters commonly refers to the gentiles' response to God. In Rom 1:5, Paul describes the goal of his apostleship as "to bring about the obedience of faith [ὑπακοὴν πίστεως] among all the gentiles [ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν] for the sake of his

[23] Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 177-178; Frame, *Thessalonians*, 233, though he admits that it may also simply be synonymous parallelism.
[24] Cf. Ps 79:6; Gal 4:8.
[25] Cf. Rom 10:3; 11:30-32.

name" and in Rom 15:18 he speaks of what Christ has done through him in bringing about the "obedience of gentiles" [ὑπακοὴν ἐθνῶν].[26] Additionally, Heb 5:9 claims that Jesus "became the source of salvation for all who obey [ὑπακούουσιν] him." Obedience does not just relate to Jewish rejection of Jesus, and so these two phrases in 2 Thess 1:8 could also be in synonymous parallelism, designating any person outside the community of Christ-followers.[27] There is no other distinction in 2 Thessalonians between Jewish and gentile nonbelievers—in 2 Thess 2:10-11 all nonbelievers are grouped together as "those who are perishing," those who "refused to love the truth and so be saved," and those who "took pleasure in unrighteousness." Therefore, since "obedience" can designate any type of person's response to God and since there is no other mention of a distinction between Jewish and gentile nonbelievers, it is best to see these phrases as a case of synonymous parallelism. In 1:8 the author comforts his audience by telling them of the future punishment that is in store for all who oppose God in a universal judgment.

The punishment that nonbelievers will receive is described in 1:9 as ὄλεθρος αἰώνιος. Ὄλεθρος can be taken in the general sense of "ruin," as occurs in OG Prov 21:7 and 1 Tim 6:9. In the Greek Jewish scriptures, ὄλεθρος often has an eschatological connotation and is frequently connected with the destruction of the nations (OG Jer 28:55; 31:3, 8, 32; 32:31; Ezk 6:14; 14:16). It retains this eschatological dimension in 1 Thess 5:3, where ὄλεθρος refers to the destruction that overtakes nonbelievers on the day of the Lord. However, ὄλεθρος can mean either literal or metaphorical destruction in these texts. If literal, it could

[26] See also Rom 6:16, "obedience, which leads to righteousness."
[27] Trilling, *zweite Brief*, 56; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 400-401; Witherington, *Thessalonians*, 196.

describe the annihilation of God's opponents; if metaphorical, it describes an ongoing state of ruin. Αἰώνιος could mean "everlasting," though it can also simply mean "a long period of time."[28] Alternatively, αἰώνιος could refer to the age to come. It is not necessarily that the ruin is everlasting, but rather that it does not belong to the present life and is instead a punishment in the age to come. Similar phrases about judgment occur in Matt 25:41 (τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον), 25:46 (κόλασιν αἰώνιον versus ζωὴν αἰώνιον), Heb 6:2 (κρίματος αἰωνίου), and Jude 7 (πυρὸς αἰωνίου δίκην), though these are equally as ambiguous as in 2 Thess 1:9. Mark 10:30 identifies ζωὴν αἰώνιον as something that will be received ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ ("in the age to come"), which could indicate life characteristic of the new age but could also mean eternal life.[29] However, in Mark 3:29 blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is described as an αἰωνίου ἁμαρτήματος, since the one who commits it "can never have forgiveness." In this case, then, αἰώνιος should be understood as "eternal," since there is no end to this sin. In Matt 18:8, in a graphic warning against temptation, Jesus urges his listeners to cut off anything that might cause them to stumble, for "it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον." Though αἰώνιος is ambiguous here, the parallel in Mark 9:42-48 indicates eternal punishment is in view, for "it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into Gehenna, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched." Matthew simplifies Mark's description, but there is no indication he means anything different, so his use of αἰώνιος in Matt 18:8 must mean "eternal." In some of these

[28] BDAG, s.v. "αἰώνιος."
[29] Cf. Luke 18:30.

texts, αἰώνιος clearly means "eternal," but the others remain ambiguous. However, they all point to a future situation—judgment or life will occur in the age to come. The specific sense meant in 2 Thess 1:9 also remains ambiguous but this discussion, while important for those with ideological interests, does not ultimately change the meaning of 2 Thess 1:9. In either case—whether αἰώνιος means the punishment is eternal or simply that it belongs to the next age—it is clearly future punishment that is directly tied to Jesus's appearance.

It is also unclear whether the destruction consists of being separated from the presence of the Lord, or whether the presence of the Lord is the cause or source of the destruction. The preposition ἀπό could support either reading. If ἀπό is read as causal here, it would mean that the Lord's presence causes the destruction.[30] In the Jewish scriptures, God's presence can be seen as destructive, as in OG Jer 4:26: "all the cities were set on fire by the presence of the Lord [ἀπὸ προσώπου κυρίου] and they were destroyed by the presence of his fierce wrath [ἀπὸ προσώπου ὀργῆς θυμοῦ αὐτοῦ]." The Lord's presence brings about destruction. Ἀπό can also designate source, as in Acts 3:20: ὅπως ἂν ἔλθωσιν καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου ("in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord"). In this verse, it is clear that the Lord's presence itself is the source of refreshment, so it is also possible that in 2 Thess 1:9 Jesus's presence is the source of destruction.

On the other hand, ἀπό could be spatial.[31] This is the common meaning of the phrase ἀπὸ προσώπου elsewhere in the New Testament. For example, ἀπό is spatial in

[30] Green, *Thessalonians*, 292; Légasse, *Thessaloniciens*, 371; Nicklas, "Intertextuality," 234-235.
[31] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 403; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 308; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 475; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 229; Boring, *Thessalonians*, 254.

Acts 5:41: "they went from the presence of the council [ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ συνεδρίου]." It is also used spatially in Rev 20:11: "from whose presence [οὗ ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου] earth and heaven fled away."[32] The situation becomes more clear when we notice this language is borrowed from Isaiah 2:

Isa 2:10 [= 2:19, 20]	**2 Thess 1:9**
ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ φόβου κυρίου away from the presence of the fear of the Lord καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ and from the glory of his might	ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου away from the presence of the Lord καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ and the glory of his might

In Isa 2:10 [= 19, 21], in a day of the Lord text, the unrighteous are told to hide *away from* the "presence of the fear of the Lord," and so the use of ἀπό there is spatial. If the same understanding of the phrase is meant in 2 Thess 1:9, it would indicate that nonbelievers are separated from the presence of the Lord when he is revealed. This makes good sense of the rest of the passage, for the fate of the believers is to be glorified in the presence of the Lord and separation from this glory would thus be a striking contrast. Based on the common use of ἀπό spatially throughout the New Testament, as well as the use of Isa 2:10 in this verse, it is best to understand ἀπό as spatial here as well. This separation occurs at the moment of the end-time event, since ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ in 1:10 covers the entire content of 1:5-10. Everything described in these verses occurs "on that day," that is, at Jesus's appearance. Due to the heavy emphasis on judgment, punishment, and vindication, this section should be understood as a final judgment scene.

[32] Cf. Acts 7:45; Gal 5:4; Rom 9:3; 2 Cor 11:3; Rev 12:14.

The Day of Jesus's Revelation

In this passage, the author describes various aspects of his view of the eschatological event in the form of a judgment scene. Terms such as day of the Lord and *parousia* are not used; instead, the author speaks of the ἀποκάλυψις of Jesus from heaven, of the angels who accompany Jesus, and of the outcome of "that day" on believers and nonbelievers. In 1:7, the rest that is promised to the afflicted is said to come ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ἀπ᾽ οὐρανοῦ. The ἐν in this verse is temporal, meaning that relief is granted when the ἀποκάλυψις occurs. The phrasing here is similar to Pauline descriptions of the *parousia.* For example, in 1 Thess 1:10, the Lord comes ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν when he comes to rescue his people from God's eschatological wrath. Paul uses the word ἀποκάλυψις in 1 Cor 1:7, which he links with the *parousia* in the following verse. In Rom 8:18-19 ἀποκάλυψις is connected to the future glorification of Jesus and his believers as it is here in 2 Thess 1:10 and 1:12. Jesus's return is also called an ἀποκάλυψις in 1 Pet 1:7, 13, and 4:13.[33] While ἀποκάλυψις is not always eschatological,[34] in 2 Thess 1:7 it is, though it has a different nuance to other terms such as *parousia* and the day of the Lord. In this section, the idea of the revelation is that Jesus is currently "hidden" in heaven. He is not recognised by everyone, but one day he will be—at which point judgment will come for those who have not known him and glory for those who have. This is clearly a moment in the future that has not yet occurred.

Jesus will be accompanied by angels on the day of his revelation. While many translations have "his mighty angels" in 1:7, many commentators argue that the phrase

[33] See also Luke 17:30; 1 Pet 1:5, 5:1.

[34] Cf. Rev 1:1, where John describes the visions in his book as "the revelation [ἀποκάλυψις] of Jesus Christ."

should be rendered as "the angels of his power/might," as αὐτοῦ modifies δύναμις and δύναμις modifies Jesus.[35] This means that the angels themselves are not inherently "mighty," but rather that they are identified as the angels "of his [Jesus's] power." As in 1 Thess 3:13 and 4:16, so here angels are associated with the eschatological event. Angels are also common figures in divine theophanies in the Jewish scriptures (Exod 19:13, 16, 19; Ps 68:18; Zech 14:5). In both Jewish and Christian texts, angels or "holy ones" accompany God or the messianic figure who comes at the end (Zech 14:5; Isa 13:3-5; 1 En. 1:9 [= Jude 14]; 1 Thess 3:13; 4:16; Mark 8:38; 13:26; Rev 19:14); the same imagery is employed here. The Christophany of the Lord Jesus is accompanied by angels, and these angels display the Lord's might.

The passage continues describing the ἀποκάλυψις of the Lord in 1:8. There is a textual variant here that has caused some confusion: The text in NA[28] is supported by the majority of manuscripts (including א A K L and P) and reads ἐν πυρὶ φλογός ("in a fire of flame"), while B D F G and Ψ have ἐν φλογὶ πυρὸς ("in a flame of fire"). The variant ἐν φλογὶ πυρὸς matches LXX Exod 3:2 and OG Isa 66:15. This variant could either be explained as a reference to those verses or as a later scribal harmonisation. On the other hand, there is an argument to be made that Isa 66 influences this whole passage.[36] Both use ἀνταποδίδωμι (Isa 66:6; 2 Thess 1:6) and ἐκδίκησιν (Isa 66:15; 2 Thess 1:8) to describe God's judgment and punishment of his enemies; both have groups of people glorifying τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου (Isa 66:5; 2 Thess 1:12). In either case, ἐν πυρὶ φλογός is certainly the more difficult reading and best

[35] Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 226; Boring, *Thessalonians*, 232.
[36] Roger D. Aus, "The Relevance of Isaiah 66:7 to Revelation 12 and 2 Thessalonians 1," *ZNW* 67 (1976): 252-268, 266-268 argues for an intentional reference to Isa 66. Cf. Niklas, "Intertextuality," 230-233.

understood as the original wording. The phrase ἐν πυρὶ φλογός is the same one used in Acts 7:30 to describe the burning bush. Acts 7:30 also has the same textual variant as 2 Thess 1:8, and the variant is found in the Sinai theophany of LXX Exod 3:2 as well. Notably, at Sinai it is specifically the ἄγγελος κυρίου ("angel of the Lord") who appears to Moses in the fire.[37]

Fire imagery is often used in connection with theophanies, as demonstrated by Acts 7:30 and Exod 3:2.[38] Furthermore, in Dan 7:9 (TH), God's throne is described as φλὸξ πυρός and the wheels of the throne as πῦρ φλέγον.[39] This would fit well with the idea here of the Lord Jesus being revealed to the world in a fire of flames just as YHWH revealed himself in a fire of flames to Moses, and just as the Ancient of Days appeared on a throne of fire. On the other hand, fire is also associated with judgment, as in Isa 66:16: ἐν γὰρ τῷ πυρὶ κυρίου κριθήσεται ("for by fire the Lord will judge").[40] Fire is a source of judgment in Daniel as well. As the Ancient One sits on his throne, in Dan 7:10 "a river of fire [ποταμὸς πυρός] went out from his presence" and the beast is killed and given over to the fire [καῦσιν πυρός] in 7:11. In both Isa 66 and Dan 7, fire is connected not only with the appearance of God, but also with the judgment that he brings when he appears. Therefore, the presence of Jesus itself inflicts the punishment, as becomes clear in the following verse. Both theophany and punishment are symbolised by this image of fire. Throughout this passage

[37] Cf. OG Dan 3:49: ἄγγελος δὲ κυρίου συγκατέβη ἅμα τοῖς περὶ τὸν Αζαριαν εἰς τὴν κάμινον καὶ ἐξετίναξε τὴν φλόγα τοῦ πυρὸς ἐκ τῆς καμίνου ("the angel of the Lord came down into the furnace to be with those around Azariah and he shook off the flame of fire out of the furnace").
[38] Cf. Exod 19:18; 24:17.
[39] OG Dan 7:9 does not have the description of the wheels under the throne, only the throne itself.
[40] Cf. Gen 19:24; Num 11:1; 16:35; 2 Kgs 1:10-14.

it is clear that Jesus's ἀποκάλυψις is a Christophany, where Jesus is revealed to the world accompanied by angels and fire. Fundamentally, it is the moment that Jesus comes down from heaven, bringing punishment for nonbelievers and glorification for believers.

Worthiness and Glorification

As a result of his ἀποκάλυψις, Jesus is glorified and he brings glory to his people (1:10). The believers will glorify the name of the Lord, and they themselves will be glorified (1:12). They will also be considered worthy of the kingdom of God when the Lord Jesus returns. These are the positive aspects of the Lord's *parousia*, which contrast with the punishment experienced by unbelievers as laid out in the preceding verses. When Jesus comes, he brings glory (δόξα) to his "holy ones." The εἰς τό + infinitive construction in 1:5 can express either result or purpose; in this case, it expresses result. The outcome of the audience's perseverance and hope is that they are καταξιωθῆναι ὑμᾶς τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ ("considered worthy of the kingdom of God"). Though some translate it as "make worthy,"[41] καταξιόω is best understood as "consider worthy," for this is the only meaning it has in the other occurrences in the New Testament.[42] For example, in Luke 20:35 Jesus speaks of "those who are considered worthy [καταξιωθέντες] of a place in that age and in the resurrection," and in Acts 5:41 the apostles "rejoiced that they were considered worthy [κατηξιώθησαν] to suffer dishonour for the sake of the name." In the present case, as well,

[41] Best, *Thessalonians*, 268; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 463, 481.

[42] Cf. 3 Macc 3:21; 4 Macc 18:3. Neither BDAG, s.v. "καταξιόω" nor LSJ, s.v. "καταξιόω" offer "make worthy" as a definition; instead, only "consider worthy" is given. However, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, s.v. "καταξιόω" does include "make worthy" as a definition.

"consider worthy" is the best translation. The audience will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, which is their goal in the midst of their suffering.

The phrase βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ("kingdom of God") is common throughout the New Testament. It occurs most often in Mark, Luke, and Acts, and the similar βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ("kingdom of heaven") appears throughout Matthew. In the Pauline corpus, the phrase appears in Rom 14:17, 1 Cor 4:20, 6:9-10, 15:50, Gal 5:21, Col 4:11, and Eph 5:5. Additionally, 1 Thess 2:1 exhorts the audience εἰς τὸ περιπατεῖν ὑμᾶς ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλείαν καὶ δόξαν ("to walk worthily of God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory"). In several of these occurrences, Paul (or the deutero-Pauline author) uses the inheritance of the future kingdom of God to urge ethical living. For example, in Gal 5:21 he warns against multiple impurities which render one unable to inherit the kingdom of God.[43] By equating kingdom and glory, 1 Thess 2:12 has this same eschatological orientation. There, as well, the idea of worthiness is connected with one's ability to receive the kingdom in the end. In 2 Thess 1:5, the kingdom of God should likewise be understood as future since it is held out to the audience as a promise, a result of God's future judgment. When Jesus is revealed, the audience's current sufferings will be vindicated as they will be considered worthy to receive the kingdom of God. Second Thessalonians does not further specify what this kingdom looks like or consists of but given the focus of the rest of the passage, it certainly seems to be associated with being in Jesus's

[43] Cf. 1 Cor 6:9; Eph 5:5, though here the inheritance is present, not future.

presence and receiving his glory.[44] While nonbelievers will be separated from this kingdom and glory, believers will be fully part of it.

Jesus's return brings glory to himself, as described in 1:10. He will be glorified and marvelled at when he comes. Here, τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ ("his holy ones") could refer either to angels or to believers. In Paul's letters, he often refers to believers as οἱ ἅγιοι.[45] In the Greek Jewish scriptures, ἁγίος as a substantive can refer either to angels[46] or to God's people; the latter is particularly popular in Daniel.[47] As determined in the previous chapter, ἁγίοι αὐτοῦ in 1 Thess 3:13 refers to angels accompanying the Lord in his *parousia*. Here, however, the reference is to believers, as the parallel phrases ἐνδοξασθῆναι ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ and θαυμασθῆναι ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύσασιν in 1:10 demonstrate. The ones who are holy are the ones who have come to believe the gospel. They are also the ones who will be able to share in Jesus's glory when he returns. This image of Jesus's presence in the midst of his believers also contrasts with the previous verse's focus on the removal of nonbelievers from Jesus's presence;[48] it is a clear assurance for the audience that in the end they will be glorified

[44] Likewise, though Paul discusses certain characteristics of the kingdom (Rom 14:17: "not eating or drinking but righteousness and peace and joy in the holy spirit"; 1 Cor 4:20: "not in word but in power"), he never further clarifies what he means by this phrase.

[45] Rom 8:27; 12:13; 15:26; 16:2; 1 Cor 6:1; 14:33; 2 Cor 9:12; Phlm 1:7.

[46] Zech 14:5; Sir 42:17; 45:2; Ps 88:6, 8; Job 15:15.

[47] Num 16:5; Ps 15:3; 33:10; Dan 7:8, 18, 21, 22, 25, 27; Wis 5:5; 18:9.

[48] The ἐν that is used in both ἐνδοξασθῆναι ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ and θαυμασθῆναι ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύσασιν could be spatial ("in the presence of his saints"/"in the presence of those who have believed"), so Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 230-231; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 476; causal (the saints/believers are the reason Christ is glorified), so Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 404; or instrumental ("by his saints"/"by those who have believed"), so Witherington, *Thessalonians*, 197. There is a parallel image in OG Psalm 88:8 [MT 89:8]: ὁ θεὸς ἐνδοξαζόμενος ἐν βουλῇ ἁγίων μέγας ("a great God glorified in the council of the holy ones"). In this psalm, the preposition is likely spatial, as also seems to be the use in 2 Thess 1:10. Thus, in the day of the Lord, Jesus is glorified and marvelled at in the midst of his believers.

because they will be with the Lord. The theme of glorification continues in 1:12, but here it is "the name of the Lord" that will be glorified. Some claim that this phrase indicates a present rather than future glorification. For example, Wanamaker argues, "Paul is forced to make the name of the Lord his point of reference in v. 12, not the person of the Lord in v. 10, because he is writing about the present glorification of the Lord who remains in heaven, not his future glorification, when he will be physically present with his people."[49] However, the same phrase appears later in the letter in 2 Thess 3:6 as well as in Rom 10:13, 1 Cor 1:2, 1:10, 5:4, and Col 3:17, and in each case "the name of the Lord" simply designates Jesus. Thus, "the name of the Lord" does refer to the person of the Lord, and 1:12 describes the glorification that occurs at the *parousia*. Jesus will be glorified in the presence of his believers.[50] Believers are likewise glorified in the presence of the Lord.[51] He shares his glory with them when he comes and is revealed to the world.

Like καταξιόω in 1:5, in 1:11 scholars translate ἀξιόω variously as "consider worthy" or "make worthy."[52] Ἀξιόω is also used in Luke 7:7, 1 Tim 5:17, and Heb 3:3 and 10:29, and in each of these cases the meaning is "consider worthy."[53] Those who translate it "make

[49] Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 235. Richard, *Thessalonians*, 311, likewise argues, "verse 12 deals not with the end-time acknowledgment and praise given the returning Lord by his retinue but with the honor which believers bestow on their Lord in their daily lives and the honor which accrues to them in return."

[50] As in 1:10, ἐν ὑμῖν in 1:12 could be spatial ("in you," "among you"), so Weima, *Thessalonians*, 486; causal ("because of you"), so Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 183; or instrumental ("by you"), so Green, *Thessalonians*, 299, Boring, *Thessalonians*, 234. Based on 1:10, it seems best to understand ἐν spatially here as well.

[51] This is the same hope of eschatological life in Jesus's presence is found in 2 Cor 4:4: "we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will bring us with you into his presence."

[52] As with καταξιόω, neither BDAG, s.v. "ἀξιόω" nor LSJ, s.v. "ἀξιόω," give the definition "make worthy." In this case, neither does *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, s.v. "ἀξιόω."

[53] Cf. 2 Macc 9:15. The verb is also used in the sense "request, ask" in Acts 13:42, 43.

worthy" do so on the basis of context, comparing it with the following clause "may [God] fulfil every good resolve and work of faith by his power." However, this meaning lacks lexical support, so as with καταξιόω in 1:5, here also the meaning is "consider worthy."[54] Thus, in the current passage, the author prays that as God called the audience in the past through the message of the gospel, so in the eschatological event he may consider them worthy of that calling. Though there is an element of personal responsibility throughout this passage, 1:11-12 makes clear that God is the one who considers the audience worthy of their calling and who fulfills "every desire for goodness and work of faith." It is through his power that these things are achieved. Furthermore, worthiness is received as a gift, as it is "according to the grace (χάριν) of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1:12). This places the focus on God, who gives worthiness and glorification to his people.

This passage is primarily about eschatology, though the pastoral goal is to comfort and reassure the community in the face of its suffering. Throughout the passage there is a strong emphasis on judgment and punishment, demonstrated by the terms such as κρίσις, ἀνταποδοῦναι, and ἐκδίκησις. Sometimes this judgment has an element of vengeance. For example, in 1:6 God avenges the afflicted Thessalonians by repaying their enemies with affliction. However, the judgment is also more generally punishment, as in 1:8, where Jesus metes out punishment to all who do not believe in or obey God. Judgment and punishment are both viewed as occurring when Jesus comes in the final day. Furthermore, by claiming that the audience's current tribulations are evidence of this future just judgment of God,

[54] Contra Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 396, 410; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 481.

the author is able to comfort them with this eschatological judgment scene that promises a reversal of fates, when their vindication will be made real.

Throughout this passage, imagery related to theophanies is used to describe the coming of Jesus, such as angels and fire, as well as glory. This future event is seen as a day of glorification for believers but a day of punishment for nonbelievers. Both God and Jesus are involved in the judgment; God's judgment is righteous (1:5), and he delivers punishment for those who are afflicting the audience (1:6). Jesus, in his ἀποκάλυψις, is the one who delivers vengeance to nonbelievers (1:7) and brings glorification to believers (1:12). In this passage, God is the one who proclaims the verdict of either judgment or glorification, while Jesus is the agent who delivers the sentence.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-12

From even the briefest glance at the secondary literature, interpreting 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12[55] appears to involve a Herculean effort. Augustine sums up his experience with this passage—particularly the identity of τὸ κατέχον/ὁ κατέχων—in words which countless readers since would surely echo: *Ego prorsus quid dixerit me fateor ignorare* ("I admit that I am completely at a loss as to his meaning").[56] Though the details may be a Gordian knot for

[55] Most scholars separate verses 13-17 from 1-12 as a new section. E.g., Dobschütz, *Thessalonicher-Briefe*, 296; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 184; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 323; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 414; Boring, *Thessalonians*, 281. However, Giblin, *Threat to Faith*, 41-49; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 242; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 491-495, treat all of chapter 2 as one section, arguing that the same topic is still being discussed in 2:13, just from a different perspective and that there are clear parallels between verses 2 and 15. However, 2:13 clearly introduces the second thanksgiving, just as in 1 Thess 2:13, so while there is continuity with 2:1-12, it is demarcated as a new section.

[56] Augustine, *Civ*. 20.19 (Greene, LCL).

interpretation, the main point is easy to understand. Chapter 2 develops the themes introduced in chapter 1. It focuses on eschatology, discussing the timing of the day of the Lord and figures such as the "man of lawlessness" and "the restrainer." There is a particular misunderstanding of the day of the Lord among the audience, which 2 Thessalonians seeks to correct. Ultimately, the point of this chapter is to correct an error about eschatology and to provide encouragement to a supposedly worried audience.

The Eschatological Error

After comforting the audience and putting their trials into perspective, the author turns to correct a serious error that has caused damage in the community, urging in 2:2: μὴ ταχέως σαλευθῆναι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ νοὸς μηδὲ θροεῖσθαι ("do not be quickly shaken from your mind or alarmed"). This gives insight into how the audience was responding—or at least how the author thought they were likely responding—to the false claim that has spread among the community. Σαλεύω, originally used to describe the effects of a storm, developed a metaphorical meaning of "shaken," as used here.[57] In particular, the author does not want them to be "shaken out of the mind"—he does not want them to be taken in by this false eschatological claim. Θροέω in the passive means "frightened" or "disturbed."[58] A striking parallel occurs in the Synoptic eschatological discourses: "when you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be frightened [μὴ θροεῖσθε]; those things must take place, but that is not yet the end" (Mark 13:7; Matt 24:6). In the parallel passage of Luke 21:9, the verb used

[57] BDAG s.v. "σαλεύω."
[58] BDAG s.v. "θροέω."

of the people's reaction is πτοέομαι ("be terrified, alarmed, frightened, startled").[59] Mark 13:7 and Matt 24:6 are the only other places in the New Testament where θροέω occurs. In each of these passages, it is clear that fear is perceived as a potential response to tribulations and false rumours before Jesus appears. Likewise, it is clear that the audience of 2 Thessalonians was disturbed by the false eschatological teaching that the letter now seeks to refute.

The author suggests that he does not know exactly where this rumour has come from in 2:2: spirit, i.e. prophetic utterance (διὰ πνεύματος),[60] word, i.e. oral teaching (διὰ λόγου), or letter (δι' ἐπιστολῆς). The phrase ὡς δι' ἡμῶν ("as if by us") appears at the end of this list and could be applied just to ἐπιστολή,[61] to λόγος and ἐπιστολή,[62] or to all three sources mentioned.[63] Interpreters are often hesitant to apply the phrase to all of the suggested sources because they cannot understand how a prophecy could be attributed to "Paul."[64] The majority take this phrase to mean that either an oral teaching, or—most commonly—letter was falsely circulating in Paul's name, claiming that the day of the Lord had arrived.[65] However, Gordon Fee has persuasively argued that the use of the preposition διά in ὡς δι' ἡμῶν does not refer to the source of the error, but to the content of the

[59] BDAG s.v. "πτοέω." Both 𝔓75 and Vaticanus read θροηθέντες instead of πτοηθέντες in Luke 24:37, demonstrating the interchangeability of the verbs.
[60] See 1 Thess 5:19-20 where πνεῦμα and προφητεία are paralleled.
[61] Richard, *Thessalonians*, 325; Green, *Thessalonians*, 304; Witherington, *Thessalonians*, 213-214, though he acknowledges it could modify all three; Boring, *Thessalonians*, 260. Cf. BDAG, s.v. "ὡς," 3c.
[62] Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 97.
[63] Best, *Thessalonians*, 278; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 187; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 417; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 505-506.
[64] Boring, *Thessalonians*, 260: "It is difficult to think that oral sermons and teaching, and especially prophetic messages, circulated as purportedly from Paul."
[65] Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 97-98; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 325; Boring, *Thessalonians*, 260. Some, however, have claimed this is a reference to 1 Thessalonians, in an attempt to question its authority: Lindemann, "Abfassungszweck," 36-42; Crüsemann, *Pseudepigraphal Letters*, 261.

message.[66] Thus, 2 Thess 2:2 claims that however the rumour had been communicated (spirit, word, letter), the message could not be attributed to "Paul."[67]

However the error has come about, 2:2 urges the audience not to be deceived by anyone claiming ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου. The translation of ἐνέστηκεν is heavily debated; many scholars struggle to understand how the Thessalonians could have believed the day of the Lord had actually occurred, so they prefer to understand it as meaning the day of the Lord "is imminent" or "in the process of coming."[68] Yet, throughout the New Testament, ἐνίστημι in the perfect tense refers to something actually present, not to some impending event (Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 3:22; 7:26; Gal 1:4; Heb 9:9). In fact, both Rom 8:38 and 1 Cor 3:22 contrast something that has happened (using ἐνίστημι in the perfect) with something in the future: οὔτε ἐνεστῶτα οὔτε μέλλοντα ("neither things present nor things to

[66] Gordon D. Fee, "Pneuma and Eschatology in 2 Thessalonians 2.1-12: A Proposal About 'Testing the Prophets' and the Purpose of 2 Thessalonians," in *To Tell the Mystery: Essays on New Testament Eschatology in Honor of Robert H. Gundry*, ed. Thomas E. Schmidt and Moisés Silva, JSNTSup 100 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 196-215. He argues that most commentators ignore the grammatical implications of διά in this phrase, which rarely if ever designates "originating source" (205).

[67] Fee, *Thessalonians*, 206-207: "In this sense, our phrase does indeed *grammatically* go with the three preceding phrases, but it is not suggesting any of the three items as being *from Paul*; rather, it refers to them as the possible means whereby he has been accredited with the content of the false teaching about the Day of the Lord. Thus Paul almost certainly does not mean, '*through* a letter, as though *from us*'; he means 'whether through [any of these means], as though through us the present teaching came to you'." Cf. Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 187: "It is more likely that the phrase goes with all three nouns, and that it refers not to whether the sources of teaching were truly Pauline but to whether the message attributed to Paul was a faithful representation of his teaching." Cf. Dobschütz, *Thessalonicher-Briefe*, 266-267; Giblin, *Threat to Faith*, 149n3; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 505.

[68] Dobschütz, *Thessalonicher-Brief*, 267-268; Dibelius, *Thessalonicher*, 44; Trilling, *zweite Brief*, 78; Wrede, *Echtheit der zweiten Thessalonicher-briefs*, 41-42. Cf. Albrecht Oepke, "ἐνίστημι," *TDNT* 2:544n2.

come"). Given this evidence, the same definition should be understood here: "the day of the Lord *has arrived*."[69]

Interpretive problems remain. How could the audience have believed the day of the Lord had actually come if in reality it had not? Some scholars have argued that the audience understood the day of the Lord as having come spiritually—it was already realised among them.[70] For example, Malherbe argues that they had interpreted 1 Thess 5:1-11 to mean "that they had escaped the judgment of the Day of the Lord and that they were living in the light of the Day. Fully clad with faith, love, and hope, they were already in possession of salvation and in full association with the Lord Jesus, which they had attained at his Parousia, which they presumably understood as a spiritual event."[71] In other words, they had a realised eschatology. There would be no future resurrection and no physical return of Jesus. This is similar to the error highlighted in 2 Tim 2:18, which describes the false teaching of Hymenaeus and Philetus, who are saying: ἀνάστασιν ἤδη γεγονέναι ("the resurrection has already taken place"). This false message in 2 Timothy is said to lead to the "upsetting" (ἀνατρέπουσιν) of some in the community—presumably because their fellow believers who have died have not participated in the resurrection alongside them and nothing has tangibly changed in their own experience. If Paul wrote

[69] Cf. Best, *Thessalonians*, 276; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 325; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 240; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 115-124; Foster, "Eschatology of the Thessalonian Correspondence," 73; Boring, *Thessalonians*, 266-268.

[70] See Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, 202-208; W. Marxsen, *Introduction to the New Testament: An Approach to its Problems* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), 39; Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?" 142-143; Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 161-178; idem., "A Matrix of Grace: The Theology of 2 Thessalonians as a Pauline Letter," in *Pauline Theology I*, ed. Bassler, 63-70, 63-66; Karl Paul Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica, and Early Christianity* (London: T&T Clark, 2002), 56.

[71] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 429.

2 Thessalonians—as Malherbe asserts—this interpretation makes little sense. First Thessalonians 4:13-18 explicitly highlights that the dead will be resurrected at the *parousia*. So, if this letter is to the same community, it raises the question—how could some in the community have believed the *parousia* had come if the dead had not been raised, especially since this is the exact topic treated in 1 Thessalonians? If Paul did not write 2 Thessalonians, there is more room for this interpretation. Yet, as Menken argues, "our author does not give any evidence that he calls in question the *character* of 'the day of the Lord' as viewed by his opponents; he only discusses its *timing*."[72]

The audience is suffering, as is made obvious in 1:5-12, and they may have interpreted their sufferings as part of the tribulation they would experience right before the day of the Lord arrived.[73] It was observed above that there is a strong connection with the Synoptic Gospels in the use of θροέω in this passage. The material in the Synoptic eschatological discourse describes the time of the end as a period of great anguish and distress for believers, as in Mark 13:19-20: "For in those days there will be suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, no, and never will be. And if the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he has cut short those days."[74] If the audience was familiar with something like this tradition—such as the claim in Dan 12:1 about "the time of the end" (Dan 12:4): "There shall be a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since the

[72] Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 100.
[73] Perhaps following a tradition similar to that found in Dan 7:19-27; 8:9-14; 11:29-35.
[74] Cf. Matt 24:21-22.

nations first came into existence"[75]—and if some among them had come to believe that their current suffering had reached the peak of distress, they may have been willing to interpret a local (or more widespread) disaster—perhaps a war, earthquake or famine (cf. Mark 13:7-8par), though the exact event cannot be suggested with any degree of specificity—as evidence that the day of the Lord had arrived.[76] If, then, the day of the Lord had arrived but the *parousia* had not arrived with it, they could have been frightened.

This error could have arisen from a misunderstanding of 1 Thessalonians or previous eschatological teaching that took the day of the Lord to be solely an event of wrath on nonbelievers, separated from the *parousia*. Barclay suggests that the audience had indeed understood the day of the Lord and the *parousia* as temporally separate events—though 1 Thessalonians had not intended that.[77] Because the audience believed the day of the Lord had begun, they were fearful for their friends and family who had not become Christ-followers and now faced judgment. However, the author spends a significant amount of time reassuring his audience of their own standing before God. As discussed in the previous section, he demonstrates in chapter 1 that their current suffering is a clear sign that they will be glorified when Jesus returns. Additionally, in 2:13 he assures them "God chose you as the firstfruits for salvation," which means receiving the glory of Christ (2:14).

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[75] Zeph 1:15 portrays the "day of the Lord" as "a day of distress and anguish." Cf. Nah 1:7; Obad 12-14; Hab 3:16

[76] Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 527-528, notes that Tacitus considered the years 51-52 "particularly ill omened, with prodigies such as repeated earthquakes and a famine." This is a speculative proposal, but if 2 Thessalonians is understood as Pauline and written shortly after 1 Thessalonians in the early 50s it is certainly an interesting piece of information that could support this theory. Barclay caveats, "it is not necessary to rely on this precarious, though tantalizing, connection. A fevered apocalyptic imagination can interpret almost any unusual event as an eschatological moment, and divine wrath can explain many types of calamities" (528).

[77] Ibid., 527.

None of this then points to a concern with the fate of those outside the community, which would suggest the audience is instead concerned with their own fate.

Holland likewise believes the audience thought the day of the Lord and the *parousia* were two separate events, but in contrast to Barclay he argues that this is a correct understanding of 1 Thessalonians and that 2 Thessalonians affirms this view, simply showing that the audience's understanding of the timing is incorrect.[78] However, in the previous chapter I examined the use of both *parousia* and day of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians and throughout the Pauline corpus, determining that the two terms do have slightly different meanings (*parousia* being reserved specifically for the coming of Jesus), but that they both describe the same day. Furthermore, 2 Thessalonians does not separate the *parousia* from the day of the Lord but rather includes the *parousia* as a part of the day of the Lord in 2:1, and both 2 Thess 1 and 2 highlight the fact that judgment will occur when Jesus returns. This would correct a false understanding that had separated the day of the Lord as a day of judgment from the *parousia* as a moment of salvation. Of the various proposals possible for what is meant by the false claim in 2:2, the most likely explanation for the problem addressed here is that at least some members of the audience did believe

[78] Holland, *Tradition*, 105, "Therefore, on the basis of the evidence from both the Old Testament and Paul's own use of the concept of the Day of the Lord, which was in turn based on that of the Old Testament, the readers might reasonably conclude that the Day of the Lord, which was to be part of the eschatological process, was a day of wrath. It was a necessary prerequisite to the parousia of Jesus Christ. But this idea provoked uneasiness both by the prospect of the wrath of God against the wicked being unleashed, and by the uncertainty over whether the steadfastness of the faithful to the tradition was sufficient to carry them through to the time of blessing. The author of 2 Thessalonians shares the belief that the Day of the Lord is a day of wrath that will precede the parousia of Christ. His scenario in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 is intended not only to demonstrate that the Day of the Lord has not yet arrived, but also to provide a sequence of events which include and extend from the present to the return of the Lord Jesus at the parousia."

the *parousia* and the day of the Lord were two separate events and had misinterpreted a local, or widespread, disaster to be the wrath of God that would come on the day of the Lord. However, as that event had not ended their persecutions nor brought vindication in the promised *parousia*, this false claim had worried many among the community.

Throughout, this passage demonstrates that "the day of the Lord" encapsulates all the different parts of the final day. Verse 1 identifies two of these: ὑπὲρ τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡμῶν ἐπισυναγωγῆς ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν ("concerning the *parousia* of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering to him"). Here Jesus's *parousia* is connected with the gathering of God's people, as demonstrated by the shared definite article. The image of Jesus coming to earth and gathering his people is similar to the picture in 1 Thess 4:17, where believers are gathered up and united with the descending Jesus. The terms of gathering are different, as in 1 Thess 4:17 they are "caught up" (ἁρπάζω) and here they are simply "gathered" (ἐπισυναγωγή), without the idea of being snatched into the air. In both passages, however, the gathering is intimately connected with Jesus's coming. In the Psalms of Solomon, it is the task of the messianic figure to gather God's people. For example, Pss. Sol. 17:26 says that at the appointed time God will raise up a king, "the son of David," who "shall gather (συνάξει) a holy people whom he shall lead in righteousness." In the Synoptic eschatological discourse, the verb ἐπισυνάγω refers to Jesus assembling his elect from among the nations at the moment of his *parousia* (Mark 13:27; Matt 24:31; cf. Did. 10.5). Similar to the Psalms of Solomon, in the Synoptic accounts Jesus is responsible for

gathering together his people—though he does so through the agency of his angels.[79] The agent of gathering is not directly specified in 2 Thess 2:1, though it is implied that Jesus is responsible for this action. Thus, in 2:1 *parousia* and ἐπισυναγωγή refer to Jesus's rescue of God's people on the day of the Lord.

However, in 2:8 *parousia* also designates the moment when Jesus will bring destruction upon the lawless one. This destruction is achieved τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ ("by the appearance of his *parousia*"). Wright argues that in 2:8-9 *parousia* refers to the "presence" of Jesus and the "presence" of the lawless one, rather than to their respective comings. Thus, in 2:8, the ἐπιφάνεια is the public display of that presence.[80] In the Pastorals, ἐπιφάνεια is used similarly to *parousia* to describe the eschatological appearance of Jesus (1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 4:1, 8; Tit 2:13). That could make the use here redundant, though if Wright's interpretation is followed then the focus is on Jesus's presence being made known. However, "coming" fits better with the sense of Jesus arriving on the scene and putting an end to the lawless one's activity. Ἐπιφάνεια designates the visible action of this coming. Therefore, τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ is not redundant—Jesus's arrival on the stage puts an end to the lawless one's scene. Thus, *parousia* also encapsulates the destruction of the false messiah.

[79] In the Mark account, Jesus is said to do the gathering, while the Matthew account specifies it is the angels who gather. However, ultimately Jesus is responsible for the gathering, whether he does it himself or sends his angels on his behalf.

[80] Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 2:1083. Cf. Stephens, "Eschatological Themes," 61, 72-73.

The Rebellion

In arguing against the false claim that the day of the Lord has arrived, the author lays out two events that must first happen: the ἀποστασία and the revelation of "the man of lawlessness."[81] In Hellenistic literature, ἀποστασία can refer to political or military rebellion.[82] For example, Diodorus Siculus describes the punishment of those who participated in a "rebellion" [ἀποστασίαν] in Thebes.[83] In the Greek Jewish scriptures it more commonly denotes a religious "rebellion"—turning away from or rebelling against God, abandoning the faith. In 2 Chr 29:19, King Ahaz's reign is described as ἐν τῇ ἀποστασίᾳ αὐτοῦ ("in his unfaithfulness"), which is exemplified by his defilement of the temple utensils.[84] The only other place ἀποστασία occurs in the New Testament is Acts 21:21, indicating a rebellion against the ancestral traditions: "and they have been told about you that you are teaching [the Jews] ἀποστασίαν from Moses."

Within Second Temple Jewish texts, there is an idea of a noted increase in wickedness at the end. For example, in 1 En. 91:7: "And when sin and iniquity and blasphemy and violence increase in every deed, and perversity and sin and uncleanness increase, a great scourge will come from heaven upon all these, and the holy Lord will come forth in wrath and with a scourge, to execute judgment upon the earth."[85] In the New

[81] Verse 3 is an anacolouthon, so many interpreters provide a clarifying phrase at the beginning of their translation, such as "*the day of the Lord will not come*, unless the *apostasia* comes first…"
[82] See Josephus, *Life* 43; Plutarch, *Galb*. 1.5. For a treatment of this term and its cognates in extant occurrences in classical and Koine literature, see Keith A. Kobelia, "Eschatological Rebellion and the *Apostasia* of 2 Thessalonians 2:3" (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2014), 65-97.
[83] Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. Hist.* 21.14.1.
[84] Cf. Josh 22:22; 2 Chron 33:19; Jer 2:19; 1 Macc 2:15.
[85] George W. E. Nicklesburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: The Hermeneia Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 137. Cf. 1 En. 93:9; Jub 23:14-23; 4 Ezra 5:1-2.

Testament, we find a similar idea of increased deceit and opposition to God in the end that will require the people of God to stand firm (Eph 6:13; 2 Tim 3:1-9; Rev 13; cf. Did. 16.3-5). The Synoptic writers portray Jesus as warning against false Christs and prophets who will come in the end times and lead people astray (Mk 13:22; Mt 24:24) and they warn "at that time there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be" (Matt 24:21), repeating the description of the time of the end from Dan 12:1. In a similar vein, 2 Thess 2 portrays an end that is heralded by the increased activity of lawlessness, which will lead many away from the truth. The context of the ἀποστασία is made clear in 2:9-12, which describes the result of the man of lawlessness's *parousia*. The lawless one performs signs and wonders that deceive people (2:9-10), convincing them that he is god and should be worshipped (2:4). Thus, the ἀποστασία is to be understood as a final rebellion against God in which followers of the man of lawlessness worship him.[86]

In the Synoptic eschatological discourse, both believers and nonbelievers are susceptible to the deceit of the end times, as seen in Mark 13:24: "For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect." Yet, the identity of the rebels in 2 Thess 2 is not immediately clear. This might indicate an apostasy of believers, where members of the community turn away from God in the end, perhaps through the deceitful actions of the man of lawlessness.[87] Yet, the

[86] This is the view of the vast majority of scholars. So Kobelia, "Eschatological Rebellion," 209, 222; Menken, *2* Thessalonians, 102-103; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 418; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 120-121; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 244; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 511.

[87] So Stephens, "Eschatological Themes," 145-147; Ahn, "Parousia in Paul's Letters," 232.

implication of 2:10 seems to exclude believers from this defection, as it is "those who are perishing" and who have already refused to love the truth who will be deceived by the lawless one. They do not become nonbelievers because of the actions of the lawless one. Instead, they are already opposed to God and because of that God actively causes them to be deceived (2:11). Furthermore, the purpose of this deceit is so that they will be condemned in the end (2:12). In contrast to "those who are perishing," those who are "beloved by the Lord" have been chosen for salvation (2:13). They will not be deceived when the lawless one comes, so they should not be deceived now. As in 2 Thess 1, the current passage describes a distinction between those who are destined to receive glory with Christ at the *parousia* and those who will be destroyed. Those who are part of the believing community will not participate in the ἀποστασία. Rather, they will "obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2:14).

The Man of Lawlessness

The most vivid portion of this passage is the dramatic portrayal of one mysterious character: ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας[88] ("the man of lawlessness"). The man of lawlessness is not Satan himself, for his actions are given power through Satan (2:9). Instead, he is portrayed as an agent of Satan who will appear on earth at an appointed time. Scholars are rightly agreed that "lawlessness" refers to opposition to God in general, rather than to the

[88] While the majority of later manuscripts read ἁμαρτίας ("sin") rather than ἀνομία ("lawlessness"), the latter is supported by ℵ and B and should be understood as the original reading.

Mosaic law specifically.[89] The same term appears in Matt 24:12 to describe the situation of the end, when false prophets lead many away from God and his truth. This "man of lawlessness" is also ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας ("the son of destruction"). This Semitic construction communicates the ultimate fate of the figure—he is doomed to destruction. Furthermore, those who follow him are described as ἀπολλυμένοις ("those who are perishing").[90] From the moment of his appearance in 2:4 it is already known that the man of lawlessness will be destroyed in the end, as will those who are deceived by him. In fact, the portrayal of this figure never allows even a hint of victory. In 2:8 the fate of this same character, though here called ὁ ἄνομος ("the lawless one"), is described before his actions: he will be slain by Jesus.

The conditional started in 2:3 is interrupted by a further description of the man of lawlessness in 2:4: ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα ("the one who opposes[91] and exalts himself against everyone called god or every object of worship"). By describing him as ὁ ἀντικείμενος, the author designates the figure as an enemy of God.[92] The further description of ὑπεραιρόμενος displays this figure's arrogance, as he positions himself higher than anything else that receives humanity's worship. The imagery

[89] Giblin, *Threat to Faith*, 81-88; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 121; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 510-513. Contra Best, *Thessalonians*, 281-283; Jewett, "Matrix of Grace," 66-67.

[90] Ἀπόλλυμι and σῴζω, which both appear in 2:10, are commonly contrasted in Paul's letters: 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15; Phil 1:28.

[91] BDAG, s.v. "ἀντίκειμαι." In the New Testament, it is used of the enemies of both Jesus and the apostles: Luke 13:17; 21:15; 1 Cor 16:9; Phil 1:28. In 1 Tim 5:14-15, the verb is associated with Satan.

[92] The same verb is used to describe God's enemies in Isa 66:6 (τοῖς ἀντικειμένοις). Roger D. Aus, "God's Plan and God's Power: Isaiah 66 and the Restraining Factors of 2 Thess 2:6-7," *JBL* 96 (1977), 537-553: 539 argues that these enemies are associated with the temple, just as the man of lawlessness is in 2 Thess 2:4. However, God is the one associated with the temple in the psalm—his voice proceeds from it, and it is not stated that the enemies are located there or indeed anywhere nearby. Satan himself is described in Zech 3:1 as the opponent (τοῦ ἀντικεῖσθαι) of Joshua the high priest.

continues to escalate as not only does this figure oppose all gods and exalt himself, he seats himself in the place of the living God of Israel, right in the holy of holies, by which action he "displays himself as being God." These actions evoke similar descriptions of kings opposed to Israel throughout the Jewish scriptures. For example, the king of Tyre in Ezek 28:2 is chastised: "you have said, 'I am a god; I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas,' yet you are but a mortal, and no god, though you compare your mind with the mind of a god."[93] Likewise, Isa 14:13-14 taunts the king of Babylon, who wanted to elevate his throne above God and so become "like the Most High." However, the portrayal of the man of lawlessness is most similar to the description of a "contemptible figure" (εὐκαταφρόνητος) in Dan 11:21 who with flattery convinces many to join him in profaning the temple by setting up the βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως ("the abomination of desolation") in the temple (11:31). In Dan 11:36-37, it is said that this figure will exalt himself over all gods and will speak "strange" (OG) or "arrogant" (TH) things (OG: ὑψωθήσεται ἐπὶ πάντα θεὸν καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεὸν τῶν θεῶν ἔξαλλα λαλήσει; TH: ὑψωθήσεται ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ μεγαλυνθήσεται ἐπὶ πάντα θεὸν καὶ λαλήσει ὑπέρογκα). Antiochus IV Epiphanes is likely the figure in mind in this description of the desolating character in Daniel. According to 1 and 2 Maccabees, Antiochus conquered Jerusalem, profaned the temple, and set up a statue of Zeus in the temple (1 Macc 1:20-24, 41-50, 54-59; 2 Macc 5:11-21, 6:1-6). Antiochus was firmly rooted as an opponent of God in Jewish tradition, a figure of "superhuman arrogance" (2 Macc 9:8),

[93] See also Ezek 28:6, 9.

and so it would not be surprising if he were the model for the eschatological opponent in 2 Thess 2.[94]

Antiochus is not the only ruler who desecrated the temple in Jerusalem. Another figure that has been suggested as an influence on the picture in 2 Thess 2 is Pompey, based on the parallels with Pss. Sol. 17.[95] Though it is not explicitly stated in Pss. Sol. 17, Pompey was reviled for desecrating the temple. Josephus reports that Pompey went into the temple "which, in former ages, had been inaccessible, and seen by none" and he "saw all that which it was unlawful for any other men to see but only for the high priests" (*Ant*. 14.71-72; cf. *J.W.* 1.152-153). Those who argue for a connection with 2 Thessalonians point to Pss. Sol. 17:11, which possibly describes Pompey as ὁ ἄνομος ("the lawless one"), the same title used in 2 Thess 2:8, though the manuscript tradition is insecure for this reading, as ἄνεμος ("wind") appears in some manuscripts.[96] Ὁ ἄνομος can just refer to a wicked person (Isa 66:3; Ezek 3:18, 19; 18:21, 24; 33:8) in Jewish texts, which would be apt for the situation in 2 Thessalonians. More significantly, though, in the Theodotion version of Dan 11:32, we find: καὶ οἱ ἀνομοῦντες διαθήκην ἐπάξουσιν ἐν ὀλισθρήμασιν ("and the lawless ones will introduce a covenant by slipping") instead of OG Dan 11:32: καὶ ἐν ἁμαρτίαις διαθήκης

[94] Irenaeus, *Haer*. 5.25.3, also connects 2 Thessalonians with Daniel, linking the lawless one with the fourth beast and the little horn of Dan 7:19-27.

[95] It is generally agreed that the "sinners" (17:5) are the Hasmoneans, and that the "person foreign to our race" (17:7) is Pompey because he conquered Jerusalem in 63 BCE and effectively ended the Hasmonean dynasty. See Joseph L. Trafton, "What Would David Do? Messianic Expectation and Surprise in Ps. Sol. 17" in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, and Theology*, ed. Eberhard Bons and Patrick Puchelle, EJL 40 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 155-174, 162; idem., "The *Psalms of Solomon* in Recent Research," *JSP* 12 (1994), 3-19; Kenneth Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord: A Study of the Psalms of Solomon's Historical Background and Social Setting* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 135-139.

[96] Robert B. Wright, ed., *The Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text*, Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies 1 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 182.

μιανοῦσιν (“and with sins against the covenant they will pollute”). Likewise, in TH Dan 12:10 we again find ἄνομος rather than ἁμαρτωλός describing the behaviour of many at the end: ἀνομήσωσιν ἄνομοι (“the lawless will be lawless”). Thus, the language of eschatological lawlessness is best explained by the influence of Daniel on 2 Thessalonians. Another link between the Psalms of Solomon and 2 Thessalonians is adduced in Pss. Sol. 17:24, where a “son of David” is raised up as king, who “shall destroy the lawless nations by the word of his mouth.” This is not identical to the “spirit of his mouth” by which the Lord kills the lawless one in 2 Thess 2:8, but it certainly is a striking image. However, both texts likely depend on Isa 11:4: πατάξει γῆν τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν πνεύματι διὰ χειλέων ἀνελεῖ ἀσεβῆ (“he shall strike the earth with the word of his mouth and with the spirit of his lips he shall kill the wicked”).[97] There is no need to posit a literary dependence of 2 Thessalonians upon Pss. Sol. 17; instead, the two reflect a common reliance on Isaiah. Even if the author of 2 Thessalonians reflected on Pompey’s actions as another example of lawless desolation of the temple, Daniel remains the better explanation of the material in chapter 2. The same can be said for a supposed connection with Caligula and his attempt to set up a statue of himself in the Jerusalem temple in 40 CE, causing a large outcry among the Jews.[98] This event could be in the author’s mind, but the images and language used in the passage are still from Daniel.

In both the Synoptic eschatological discourse and in Revelation there is a clear dependence on Daniel for the portrayal of apocalyptic opponents of God. In the Synoptics,

[97] Cf. Ps 32:6; Wis 11:20; Rev 19:15; 4 Ezra 13:10.
[98] Philo, *Embassy* 188; Josephus, *J.W.* 2.184-185; *Ant.* 18.261-278.

the "desolating sacrilege" (Mk 13:14; Matt 24:25) appears in the temple[99] before a time of "great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be" (Matt 24:20), before the Son of Man appears. This entire section of the Synoptic eschatological discourse draws directly on Daniel 7-12. Revelation 13 uses Dan 11 in its portrayal of the two "beasts," and this account has interesting connections with 2 Thess 2. In Rev 13:5, the first beast is said to blaspheme against God and his dwelling (i.e., heaven) while in 2 Thess 2:4 the man of lawlessness "opposes and exalts himself" and "sits in the temple of God [i.e. God's dwelling place] declaring himself to be God." The second beast of Rev 13:13-15 performs signs and so deceives everyone on earth apart from God's people, and in 2 Thess 2:10 the lawless one performs false signs and wonders which deceive "those who are perishing," but do not deceive believers, who are already aware of "the mystery of lawlessness." Furthermore, in both accounts there is a call for believers to persevere (Rev 13:10; 2 Thess 2:15). Though there is no clear sign of literary dependence between Revelation and 2 Thessalonians, the descriptions are very similar and given Revelation 13's clear dependence on Daniel this would further confirm that Daniel is also the main influence of the description in 2 Thess 2.[100] This conclusion is strengthened by the influence of Dan 7-12 on the Synoptic eschatological discourse, which also shares significant parallels with both 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Overall, though there may be resonances with figures like Pompey and Caligula, ultimately the author draws on the tradition represented in Dan 7-12 for his portrayal of the man of lawlessness.

[99] This location is implied in Mark 13:14, but clear in Matt 24:15.

[100] This is not to suggest a literary dependence between Revelation and 2 Thessalonians, but rather that both use Daniel in their own apocalyptic descriptions.

The man of lawlessness will go beyond any previous opponent of God in actually seating himself in God's place in the temple. Many in the ancient church considered the reference to the temple to be the physical temple (or a future rebuilt temple) in Jerusalem,[101] but many modern scholars argue that this temple is figurative, simply illustrating how profane this figure will be.[102] Elsewhere in the Pauline corpus believers are referred to as ναὸς θεοῦ ("the temple of God") (1 Cor 3:16-17), ναὸς θεοῦ ἐσμεν ζῶντος ("the temple of the living God") (2 Cor 6:16), and ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ ("a holy temple in the Lord") (Eph 2:21), which might be an explanation for the imagery here. Yet, in each of these instances the identification of the people as the temple is made explicit. In 2 Thessalonians, however, the emphasis is on the visible action of the man of lawlessness, which makes it likely that the temple should be understood as physical. Whether a genuine epistle of Paul or a pseudepigraph, if this letter was written before 70 CE there is no problem with taking this as a reference to the physical temple in Jerusalem. The figurative reading is driven both by those whose ideology requires Paul to be inerrant regarding the fall of the temple and those who presuppose that a post-70 pseudonymous author would not refer to the destroyed temple. However, the figurative reading cannot be justified, for, as Nicholl argues, "as a clearly observable and concrete event, the rebel's taking his seat in the Jerusalem temple meets the criterion of being an unmistakably evident 'sign' which must

[101] See Irenaeus, *Haer.* 5.25.4; 5.30.4; Hippolytus, *Antichr*. 6. Cf. Best, *Thessalonians*, 286; Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 105; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 122.

[102] Trilling, *zweite Brief*, 86-87; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 191-192; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 328-329, 351; L. J. Lietaert Peerbolte, *The Antecedents of Antichrist: A Traditio-Historical Study of the Earliest Christian Views on Eschatological Opponents* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 77-78; Légasse, *Thessaloniciens*, 391. Giblin, *Threat to Faith*, 76-80.

transpire before the Day can come."[103] This literal interpretation would also fit the parallels with Daniel in which the defiled temple is certainly understood as physical. Whether Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians or not, there is no problem with taking the reference to the temple as literal.

Before the day of the Lord arrives, the man of lawlessness must be revealed (ἀποκαλυφθῇ, 2:3). Just as Jesus has his own revelation (2 Thess 1:7), so does the man of lawlessness. Given that Jesus's revelation is visible to the whole world, the same idea of a public unveiling is probably in order here.[104] The fact that the man of lawlessness is still able to deceive people despite this public display is due to God's sending of an ἐνέργειαν πλάνης ("deluding power") that causes them to believe what is blatantly false (2:11). Though the man of lawlessness is not on the scene yet, he is anticipated by the "mystery of lawlessness," which is presently active. This is in contrast with the lawless one who will be revealed in the future, and so "mystery" likely refers to the secret working of lawlessness in the world that will become obvious once the lawless one is revealed. Verse 6 clarifies that he is currently being held back by a figure called ὁ κατέχων. Though there could be several options for the referent of αὐτὸν in 2:6, it is best taken as describing the lawless one, for in verses 3 and 8 he is identified as the one who will be revealed.

[103] Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 122-123.
[104] Contra Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 257, who argues that the revelation is just to the church.

The Restrainer

The focus shifts in 2:6 from the man of lawlessness's actions to the role of another mysterious figure(s) designated as τὸ κατέχον (2:6) and ὁ κατέχων (2:7), who is often referred to as "the restrainer."[105] There are nearly as many options for who the restrainer is as there are interpreters of 2 Thessalonians. Before diving into the murky waters of potential interpretations, there are several grammatical quandaries that should first be noted. One is the use of a neuter participle in 2:6, which indicates an impersonal force, and a masculine participle in 2:7, indicating a personal being. There is a similar treatment of lawlessness as both impersonal ("the mystery of lawlessness" in 2:7) and personal ("the man of lawlessness" in 2:3 and "the lawless one" in 2:8).[106] Any interpretation of κατέχον/κατέχων will need to take into account the difference in genders here. Additionally, the second half of 2:7 reads: μόνον ὁ κατέχων ἄρτι ἕως ἐκ μέσου γένηται (lit. "ὁ κατέχων now only until he is away"). A verb should be supplied here from the previous clause to clarify the meaning: "ὁ κατέχων is only at work [ἐνεργεῖται] now until he is away."[107] In light of the debate surrounding the restrainer, scholars have suggested that 2 Thessalonians may refer to

[105] BDAG, s.v. "κατέχω"; LSJ, s.v. "κατέχω." Κατέχω has several different meanings: "prevent, restrain" (Luke 4:42; Rom 1:18; Phlm 13); "hold fast" to traditions or beliefs (Luke 8:15; 1 Cor 11:2; 15:2; 1 Thess 5:21; Heb 3:6, 14; 10:23); "possess" (1 Cor 7:30; 2 Cor 6:10; Matt 21:38); "bind, confine" (Rom 7:6); "occupy" (Luke 14:9). It is the first definition which has typically been adopted by interpreters. The ancient church also understood κατέχω in the sense of restraint or hindering: Tertullian, *Res*. 24; John Chrysostom, *Hom. 2 Thess*. 4; Milligan, *Thessalonians*, 101; Peerbolte, "The ΚΑΤΈΧΟΝ/ΚΑΤΕΧΩΝ," 144-145, though he prefers the synonym "to withhold"; Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 568-570; Kobelia, "Eschatological Rebellion," 194.

[106] So Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica, and Early Christianity*, 58-59; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 567; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 195.

[107] The exact phrase ἐκ μέσου γένηται is rare, appearing only here in the New Testament and mostly only in later quotations of this verse. LSJ, s.v. "μέσος," III.c: ἐκ τοῦ μέσου = "away." According to BDAG, s.v. "γίνομαι," 6b, when ἐκ μέσου is combined with γίνομαι it means "remove."

someone known to the audience, but that we have lost the key to interpreting who this figure is.[108] In 2:5, the author asks: Οὐ μνημονεύετε ὅτι ἔτι ὢν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ταῦτα ἔλεγον ὑμῖν; ("Do you not remember that when I was still with you I used to say these things?"). If Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians, then he indicates that the audience had information from his previous visit to which we simply do not have access. On the other hand, if 2 Thessalonians is pseudonymous then this verse could simply be a rhetorical device. As Peerbolte argues, it is "very likely that the vagueness of the terms used is intentional, and that the author did not refer to any identifiable object or being at all."[109] He reasons from the basis of 2 Thessalonians as a deutero-Pauline letter that the pseudonymous author was attempting to provide an answer for the delay of the *parousia*. By keeping his terms intentionally vague, this author could refrain from giving a definitive answer, while assuring readers with a fictional picture in 2 Thess 2:5 of Paul having previously spoken about this issue to his communities. Thus, for Peerbolte, the quest for the κατέχων's identity is misguided.[110] However, there are some clues in the passage that might help us make at least a reasonable guess at the meaning here.

[108] J. Schmid, "Der Antichrist und die hemmende Macht (2 Thess 2,1-12)," *TQ* 129 (1949): 330: "Der Schlüssel zur Lösung dieses Rätsels ist unauffindbar verloren und alle Versuche, es zu lösen, beweisen nur, daß dem so ist." Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *First and Second Thessalonians*, IBC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 114, notes: "The identity of the restrainer is utterly hidden from us." Koester, "From Paul's Eschatology," 457, likewise argues: "The question of the identity of the retarding element and/or person will probably never be solved."

[109] Peerbolte, "The KATEXON/KATEXΩN," 139.

[110] Cf. Légasse, *Thessaloniciens*, 392, 397-398; Trilling, *zweite Brief*, 89-90, 102; Boring, *Thessalonians*, 276-277.

Ancient interpreters such as Tertullian suggested that τὸ κατέχον/ὁ κατέχων represented the Roman Empire and the emperor.[111] In this interpretation, 2 Thessalonians presents the Roman Empire as keeping evil in check through law and order. The New Testament contains a mixture of views on the Roman Empire. On the one hand, texts such as Rom 13:1-7 and 1 Pet 2:14 portray the governing forces as ordained by God and providers of order. On the other hand, Revelation viewed Rome as the epitome of evil, as displayed in her identification as Babylon, and Acts 16:19-24 depicts Paul as suffering at the hands of the Roman authorities—though Acts also demonstrates that Paul was ultimately vindicated by the Roman authorities. The κατέχον/κατέχων could simply be seen as a neutral force, a tool used by God, in which case the Roman Empire could fit into this view. However, nothing else in the passage suggests that the Roman Empire and emperor are in mind. Alternatively, some have understood τὸ κατέχον as the preaching of Christian missionaries in general and ὁ κατέχων as the apostle Paul in particular, though it has failed to attract widespread scholarly support.[112] It is because people have still not heard the gospel message that the man of lawlessness is currently held back. The obvious objection is that this interpretation presupposes Pauline authorship, for if Paul did not write

[111] Tertullian, *Res*. 24; Chrysostom, *Hom*. 2 *Thess*. 4; John of Damascus, *Ep. ad Thess. II* 2. Cf. C. K. Barrett, 'The New Testament Doctrine of Church and State," in *New Testament Essays*, ed. C. K. Barrett (London: SPCK, 1972), 1-19, 12-13. Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 256-257—though he argues that the Roman Empire is an evil force, taking κατέχων as "hold sway, rule." Arguing more broadly for political rulers in general and the principle of law and order: Milligan, *Thessalonians*, 101; Morris, *Thessalonians*, 227; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 337-340. This view suffers from the same general criticisms as the Roman Empire interpretation.

[112] Oscar Cullmann, "Eschatology and Missions in the New Testament," in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology*, ed. W. D. Davies and D. Daube (Cambridge: University Press, 1956), 409-421; Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, trans. Frank Clarke (London: SCM, 1959), 36-42. Cf. Justin, *1 Apol*. 45.

2 Thessalonians then the author certainly would not have pointed to him as ὁ κατέχων, for his "removal" through death had not brought the appearance of the man of lawlessness. If Paul did write 2 Thessalonians, then his expectation in 1 Thess 4:15, 17 of living until the *parousia* would make it nonsensical for him to believe he would be removed beforehand.

While the majority of options refer to a positive figure or force as the restrainer, it is possible that this figure is instead hostile.[113] For example, Giblin suggests that κατέχω means "possess" or "seize" instead of "restrain," and he argues that it refers to a prophet among the community who has been possessed by an evil spirit and is acting as a false prophet.[114] It is this false prophet who is responsible for disturbing the community with the erroneous eschatological claims, and it is only when he is removed that the eschatological drama will unfold. However, this definition would require κατέχω to be passive, which is not the case in the current passage. As noted above, "restrain" is the most common interpretation of κατέχω throughout the literature and also makes the most sense of the context. Additionally, the purpose of the restrainer is to hold back the man of lawlessness and prevent unrestrained evil on the earth. Only when the time has come for the lawless one to be revealed will the restrainer leave the stage. Thus, it would seem most likely that the restrainer works against the lawless one and Satan. God is in control throughout the

[113] See P. S. Dixon, 'The Evil Restraint in 2 Thess 2:6,' *JETS* 33 (1990), 445-449; Giblin, *Threat to Faith*, 167-242.

[114] Giblin, *Threat to Faith*, 224-242; cf. idem., "2 Thessalonians Re-Read as Pseudepigraphical: A Revised Reaffirmation of *The Threat to Faith*," in *Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. Collins, 459-469; Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica, and Early Christianity*, 49-67; Green, *Thessalonians*, 316.

passage, which means the restrainer works alongside him, keeping the man of lawlessness in check until the appointed time.[115]

Within Second Temple literature, there is a motif of the binding of Satan or other evil forces, usually achieved by an angel. For example, Tob 8:3: "The odour of the fish so repelled the demon that he fled to the remotest parts of Egypt. But Raphael followed him, and at once bound him there hand and foot." Likewise, 1 En. 10:4: "To Raphael [the Most High] said, 'Go, Raphael, and bind Asael hand and foot, and cast him into the darkness.'"[116] This motif appears again in Christian apocalyptic literature; in Rev 20:1-3, an angel binds Satan with a chain "and threw him into the pit, and locked and sealed it over him, so that he would deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years were ended." In light of this binding motif in apocalyptic literature, it has been argued that this "restrainer" in 2 Thess 2 is an angel[117]—often understood as the archangel Michael.[118] This interpretation is usually based on the description of Michael throughout Dan 10-12, in which Michael's role is to help God's people by withstanding the evil patron angels of their enemies. Furthermore, in Dan 12:1 Michael is said to "stand" (MT: עמד), "arise" (TH: ἀναστήσεται), or "pass by" (OG: παρελεύσεται) with the result that unprecedented trouble comes upon the earth, but God's people are delivered from it. It has been demonstrated above that this

[115] Some argue that God himself and his plan or will is the restrainer, such as Trilling, *zweite Brief*, 92; Sigve K. Tonstad, "The Restrainer Removed: A Truly Alarming Thought (2 Thess 2:1-12)," *HBT* 29 (2007): 133-151. However, the fact that the restrainer will leave the scene at the appointed time means it is more likely a supernatural agent of God's than God himself.
[116] Nicklesburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*, 28. See also 1 En. 10:11 (where Michael is the angel doing the binding); 18:12-19:2; 21:1-6; 54:4f; T. Levi 19:12; Jub 48:15; Rev 20:2.
[117] Dibelius, *Thessalonicher*, 50; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 199-200; Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 112-113; Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 92.
[118] Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 225-249; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 574-576.

section of Daniel stands behind the description of the man of lawlessness, so it would follow that other elements of this passage could likewise be influenced by the same chapters. Though κατέχω is not used in Daniel of Michael, in a fascinating line in *PGM* IV.2768-2772 we find: καὶ Ὡρίων καὶ ὁ ἐπάνω καθήμενος Μιχαήλ ἑπτὰ ὑδάτων κρατεῖς καὶ γῆς, κατέχων, ὅν καλέουσι δράκοντα μέγαν ("Both Orion and Michael who sits above: you hold the seven waters and the earth, restraining, the one they call the great serpent"). This is not incontrovertible evidence that the motif of Michael as a restrainer was widespread in Second Temple Judaism, especially since this manuscript dates from the third or fourth century CE. However, it is an intriguing connection, showing that Michael could be the subject of κατέχω. Furthermore, Michael is linked with the heavenly defeat of "the great dragon" in Rev 12:7-9—before Satan is then cast down to earth and "make[s] war on … those who keep the commandments of and hold the testimony of Jesus" (Rev 12:17). If this is linked with the imagery in mind in *PGM* IV.2768-2772, the use of κατέχω is significant. This interpretation may not seem to explain the neuter τὸ κατέχον, as it is difficult to understand why two differently gendered participles would be used of this one character. Nicholl responds to this objection by arguing that with "the neuter the author is referring to Michael with his focus on Michael's restraining activity and by the masculine he is referring to Michael as a person."[119] This interpretation as a whole makes the most sense of the evidence. It accounts for the differently gendered participles, as well as the κατέχων's removal from the scene. Parallels for the imagery can be found in Second Temple and Christian literature, meaning it would have been understandable to the original audience.

[119] Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 248.

Most importantly, it is based on the same text (Dan 7-12) that influences other aspects of 2 Thess 2. It seems most likely, then, that ὁ κατέχων is an angel—likely Michael—following the pattern in Jewish and Christian literature of angels binding Satan or other evil beings. Rather than binding the man of lawlessness, however, the angel restrains him from coming in full and obvious power, which allows the mystery of lawlessness to still be at work, but in a secretive way. This modification is influenced by Michael's activity in Dan 10-12. Furthermore, the neuter τὸ κατέχον focuses on the actual activity of restraint.

Second Thessalonians 2 seeks to correct an error about eschatology that has arisen among the community, namely that the day of the Lord has arrived. To counter this claim, the author describes events that must still occur—and have not yet—before the day of the Lord will indeed come. In the setting out of this apocalyptic scheme, he describes two particularly mysterious eschatological figures: the man of lawlessness and the restrainer. Both of these figures are drawn from apocalyptic motifs represented in Dan 7-12. The timing of events in 2 Thess 2 has a close correspondence with the Synoptic eschatological discourse: At the initiation of the end, a desolating, lawless character/object is set up in the temple. People are deceived into believing the divine claims of false messiahs through their deceitful signs and wonders, resulting in unfettered lawlessness throughout the earth. It is only after great deceit and tribulation that the Lord appears and gathers his people to him. The parallels between these two accounts make it likely that the audience had been misled into interpreting their affliction and trials as the end-time tribulation that belongs to this eschatological tradition. In response to a disastrous event, some had claimed God's

judgment had arrived in the day of the Lord. This frightened the community because the judgment did not lead to an end of their own suffering, and the promised *parousia* of Jesus had failed to occur. In response, the author readjusts their timetable, demonstrating that certain key events have not yet occurred, so the day of the Lord certainly cannot have occurred either. It is only after God decides to reveal the lawless figure that the eschatological event will happen.

2 THESSALONIANS 3:6-15

The majority of material in 2 Thessalonians is eschatological. However, chapter 3 mainly contains warnings about those in the community who are being ἀτάκτως ("disorderly"). The root ἀτακτ- appears three times in this passage: ἀτάκτως in 3:6 and 3:11 and ἠτακτήσαμεν in 3:7; it also appears in 1 Thess 5:14. In general, the ἀτακτ- root refers to behaviour that is "disorderly"—actions contrary to order, whether social, political, or natural.[120] In this passage, this group is often identified as "idlers" because they are further described in 3:11 in a play on words as "not doing any work, but being busybodies" [μηδὲν ἐργαζομένους ἀλλὰ περιεργαζομένους] though ἀτακτ- does not require a connotation of laziness. Indeed, they are busy, just not with the work they should be doing. These people are also described as "not walking according to the tradition which [they] received from us" (3:6). In 3:7, the author further describes what he means, contrasting his own behaviour as "not disorderly"

[120] BDAG, s.vv. "ἀτακτέω" "ἄτακτος," "ἀτάκτως." See also Ceslaus Spicq, "Les Thessaloniciens 'inquiets' étaient-ils des paresseux?" *ST* 10 (1956): 1-13, who argues that ἀτακτ- never means "lazy" or "idle" in any of the comparative documents. Furthermore, as Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 168, argues, "If 'Paul' had wished to specify idleness or laziness *per se*, he could have used ἀργέω."

[οὐκ ἠτακτήσαμεν] because he worked to pay for his own food so that he would not burden the community. This is the model the disorderly have failed to imitate, and so they have failed to follow the command, "If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat" (3:10). In response to this behaviour, the author commands them "so that working quietly they might eat their own bread." This same word is used in 1 Thess 5:14, where the community is exhorted to "admonish the disorderly" [νουθετεῖτε τοὺς ἀτάκτους]. The disorderly may also be implied in 1 Thess 4:11-12, where the community is encouraged "to aspire to live quietly and mind their own affairs and to work with [their] hands … so that [they] would behave properly towards outsiders and not be in need." There is no immediately obvious link between 1 Thess 4:11-12 and 5:14, but the author of 2 Thessalonians—if writing after 1 Thessalonians—connects them for he describes the disorderly using some of the same vocabulary and ideas as 1 Thess 4:11-12.[121]

There is much debate about what in particular this group is doing and why it is an issue of disorder for the community. Many scholars believe eschatology is connected to the issue of the disorderly, particularly because these are the only issues, besides persecution, addressed in 2 Thessalonians.[122] Jewett, for example, believes eschatology is the root cause of the behaviour of the disorderly, arguing the disorderly were millenarian radicals who believed there was no imminent *parousia* because they already experienced it in their ecstatic activities and so they "resisted on principle the structures of everyday life including

[121] Contra Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 280.

[122] Menken, "Paradise Regained," 271: "it would be strange indeed if, in such a short letter as 2 Thess is, the only two specific problems discussed were not related."

the work ethic, the sexual ethic, and the authority of congregational leadership."[123] After Paul sent 1 Thessalonians, these radicals interpreted it to mean the millennium had arrived, which solidified their resistance to these structures, as well as to the leaders.[124] Yet, there is no reason to read 1 Thess 5:12-22 as solely addressed to the ἄτακτοι as Jewett has to for his interpretation. This section is for the whole community, and so the appeal to respect the church leaders does not indicate insubordination from a segment of the community; instead, it should be read as a general exhortation. Jewett later modifies his argument, still believing the disorderly are eschatological radicals, but that the main issue was not a resistance to church leaders and the order of self-sufficiency, but rather a refusal to contribute to the community.[125] To support this argument, he claims that in Thessalonica the believers met in "tenement churches" rather than houses. According to Jewett, in a house church the owner of the house would act as the patron of the group and would provide the food for the communal meal. In a tenement church, on the other hand, there was no patron and so all had to contribute to the communal meal. In 1 Thess 4, the discussion about working and depending on no one is linked with brotherly love, and in 2 Thess 3:13 working quietly is equated with "well doing" (καλοποιοῦντες). For Jewett, this suggests that the food for communal meals was provided by members of the community and not by patrons.[126] Because of this, any refusal of a member to contribute to the

[123] Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 176.
[124] Ibid., 177.
[125] Jewett, "Tenement Churches," 23-43. This is contrary to his previous claim in *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 103, where he argued 1 Thess 5:12-13 was written to justify the status of the patrons and patronesses of the Thessalonian house churches, who were the leaders of the community.
[126] Ibid., 38.

community pot would cause tension. Furthermore, as Jewett argues, this passage must be about communal eating, since the command would only be enforceable if the community "had jurisdiction over the regular eating of its members, which would only have been possible if the community was participating in a common meal on an ongoing basis."[127] However, Jewett does not give any specific evidence that the community in Thessalonica consisted solely of tenement churches. If the community is more economically varied than Jewett suggests, then the command of 3:10 could still be enforceable outside of a communal meal setting by requiring the wealthier members of the community to stop providing for the disorderly among them. Furthermore, the apostolic "right" [ἐξουσίαν] to food and support claimed in 3:9 should be compared with 1 Cor 9:3-18, in which Paul speaks of how he has not made use of his right [ἐξουσίαν] as an apostle to receive a living without working manually. In particular, Paul asks in 1 Cor 9:4, "Do we not have a right to eat and drink?" and in 1 Cor 9:6, "Is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to not work?" Thus, the apostolic right that is mentioned in 2 Thess 3:9 is the right to a living, not the right to participate in the communal meal without contributing. Therefore, the issue cannot be that the disorderly had stopped contributing to the love feast but that they depended on those in the community for their living.

Alternatively, Menken has proposed that the problem with the disorderly is they were not fulfilling the order established by God in Gen 3:17-19 that a person had to work for his living because they believed they were now in the new creation and the mandate to

[127] Ibid., 37.

work no longer applied.[128] Yet, because these people still had to eat, the rest of the community provided their food and so the disorderly became a burden. However, God's command to work is a prelapsarian edict. In Gen 2:5, there are no plants for food yet because "there was no one to till the ground," so in 2:15 Adam is put in Eden to till it. Thus, Adam is given work to produce food before the Fall. What changes after the Fall is that this work becomes hard. Furthermore, there is no reference whatsoever to the concept of the Fall or its reversal in 2 Thessalonians. Another eschatological explanation is that the disorderly are members of the community who had given up working in light of the impending day of the Lord and had instead gone around preaching, trying to convert people before God's wrath arrived, which has caused tension with the nonbelievers.[129] Furthermore, since they had given up work they became a burden on the rest of the community who had to support them, causing internal tension. This active evangelism may explain some of the background of 1 Thessalonians and be a reason for their persecution by outsiders.[130] However, as determined in the previous section, the eschatological belief mentioned in 2 Thess 2:2 is not that the day of the Lord is *about* to come, but rather that it has *already* come. Barclay suggests that 1 Thessalonians caused a "feverish expectation" of the *parousia* among the Thessalonians, and so when a local disaster occurred some believed this was the arrival of the day of the Lord, causing great

[128] Menken, "Paradise Regained," 271-289.
[129] Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 528; Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica*, 246-247; Gaventa, *Thessalonians*, 129.
[130] As Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica*, 245-250, argues. The fact that Paul writes in 1 Thess 1: that the gospel had sounded forth from Thessalonica throughout Macedonia and Achaia seems to imply that there were some in the community actively involved in evangelism in these regions.

confusion and upheaval in the community. According to Barclay, "The whole atmosphere was frenzied enough to encourage many who had given up their jobs to continue their urgent, full-time evangelism (3:6-13)."[131] Yet, there is nothing in 2 Thess 3:6-15 that would suggest it should be connected to the preceding eschatological material; it reads more as an addendum to the letter, addressing a separate pastoral issue.

Since there is not an explicit link between the eschatological material in chapters 1 and 2 and the material in chapter 3, some scholars do not believe the disorderly behaviour is influenced by eschatological thought.[132] For example, Russell suggests that the problem of the disorderly started before any eschatological issues, so the two cannot be connected.[133] The problem, Russell claims, was those in the lower class took advantage of their new spiritual brothers and sisters by enjoying their patronage rather than working, exploiting their generosity and becoming burdens to the community.[134] Russell explains that they had stopped working because they "were caught up in new beliefs and practices," yet fails to explain what beliefs in particular would cause them to reject the need for employment.[135] It is true that the issues of eschatology and the disorderly are not linked in 2 Thessalonians; a new section is indicated in 3:6 by the closing benediction in 3:5, which serves as a conclusion for the preceding section. Furthermore, the issue is certainly one of some members of the community depending on others for their living, so it seems that

[131] Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 528.
[132] B. N. Kaye, "Eschatology and Ethics," 47-57; Witherington, *Thessalonians*, 245; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 157-179; Campbell, *Framing Paul*, 239n86.
[133] Ronald Russell, "The Idle in 2 Thess 3.6-12: An Eschatological or a Social Problem?" *NTS* 34 (1988): 105-119.
[134] Ibid., 113.
[135] Ibid.

some sort of patronage situation is occurring. A more satisfying explanation is proposed by Nicholl who, modifying Gerd Theissen's phrase, argues for a "'transformative love-patriarchalism' in the Pauline and Paulinist churches, in which fundamental social structures are preserved but transformed from within by Christian love … which points forward to the new social order to be ushered in at the eschaton."[136] In this model, the rich are expected to be generous, but they do not need to provide for the whole community out of a common pot. On the other hand, manual labourers are still expected to work as befits their social status. The problem in 2 Thess 3:6-15 is that they had stopped working and instead relied on the generosity of the rich community members. This would cause disorder in the church not only because the wealthier members felt exploited, but also because the disorderly spent their time interfering in other community members' affairs rather than actively working.

Finally, if the letter is pseudonymous, it could be that the author has taken terminology from 1 Thessalonians and created a fictional situation in which the problem in 1 Thessalonians had grown worse.[137] However, the material which is used in 2 Thessalonians is not connected in any way in 1 Thessalonians. The fact that the author combines issues of not working with the brief comment to the disorderly in 5:14 would suggest that he has a specific situation in mind. The best way to account for the disorderly

[136] Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 173. Nicholl's model is influenced by Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*, ed. and trans. John H. Schütz (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982), who coined "love patriarchalism" (107-109), though Nicholl modifies Theissen's model in response to David G. Horrell's study, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement*, SNTW (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996).
[137] So Trilling, *zweite Brief*, 144 and *Untersuchungen zum zweiten Thessalonicherbrief*, 98-101.

in 2 Thess 3:6-15 is to read it as an issue separate from eschatology, for there are no obvious links between the two sections. This happens to fit with the same material in 1 Thessalonians, which also has no connection to the eschatological material in the epistle. Therefore, the disorderly are not responsible for the eschatological error in the community nor are their actions caused by a belief that the day of the Lord has arrived. Instead, they are manual workers who have stopped working and are instead exploiting the generosity of their fellow community members. This has caused tension and disorder in the church, so 2 Thessalonians firmly rebukes this group and exhorts the community to put in place preventative measures to restore order. The author refers to the example set by Paul and his fellow missionaries—who were themselves manual labourers—as the pattern which these believers should follow.

CONCLUSION

Eschatological material dominates 2 Thessalonians, even more so than in 1 Thessalonians. This is because the main issue addressed in the letter is a misunderstanding about the day of the Lord. Some among the audience have somehow been led to believe that the day of the Lord—in their minds distinct from the *parousia*—has come, but this event has not brought the hoped-for vindication that they expected, which has disturbed the community. Second Thessalonians corrects the view that the day of the Lord has already arrived, presenting a futurist eschatology by laying out the events that must still happen and have not yet. Connected to this, 2 Thessalonians highlights the fact that the audience is still suffering as evidence that they have not yet experienced God's righteous judgment.

As in chapter 1, the eschatological material examined in the present chapter can be synthesised into five categories: terminology, timing, eschatological fates, agency, and circumstances for writing.

In this letter, several different terms are used to refer to Jesus's eschatological visitation. In the first place, 1:7 describes the ἀποκάλυψις of Jesus, which involves two aspects: destruction for nonbelievers and glorification for believers—and Jesus's presence itself accomplishes these two outcomes. This ἀποκάλυψις is thoroughly informed by theophanic imagery, involving angels and fire, and it also involves application of YHWH texts (Isa 2, 66) to Jesus as Lord. In 2:1, the *parousia* is mentioned and connected with the ἐπισυναγωγή of the believers in the end. In 2:8, Jesus's *parousia* is also shown to be the moment of victory over the man of lawlessness. Thus, the *parousia* has two different sides to it: On the one hand, Jesus brings destruction to the man of lawlessness and all those who have followed him; on the other hand, believers are gathered to be with Jesus at this moment. It is clear that in 2 Thessalonians both ἀποκάλυψις and *parousia* refer to the same event: Jesus's arrival from heaven in judgment. Notably, the author closely connects the day of the Lord and the *parousia* in 2:1-2, showing them to be the same event. Though *parousia* is used specifically in reference to the action of Jesus's coming, he comes on the day of the Lord. When Jesus comes, he brings God's wrath, so the day of the Lord cannot be understood as a separate event, which seems to be what the audience has misunderstood in their eschatological thought. This is a much clearer connection between the day of the Lord and the *parousia* than anything found in 1 Thessalonians.

Since 2 Thessalonians corrects a rumour that claims, "the day of the Lord has come," two proofs are offered that this day has not yet come: the apostasy has not occurred and the man of lawlessness has not been revealed (2:3). Beyond this, however, 2 Thessalonians does not indicate how soon these events are meant to happen—only that the restrainer must first leave the scene (2:7), which will happen at an appointed time (2:6). Likewise, chapter 1 speaks of a future punishment that will come upon the audience's enemies, but it does not indicate whether this punishment will come soon or if it is in the distant future. In any case, there are still events that must happen before all this can occur, so the audience should not expect the day of the Lord to be right around the corner.

There are two possible outcomes on the day of Jesus's revelation. The hope held out to the audience is that they would be brought into Jesus's presence when he returns and would share in his glory (1:10, 12; 2:1, 14). Yet, Jesus's presence also brings destruction to those opposed to God (1:8); this destruction involves separation from Jesus's presence (1:9). This dualism is highlighted as a source of comfort for the audience as the author focuses on the eschatological reversal that will occur in the end—those who are currently suffering affliction will be vindicated while those who afflict them will be punished. Those who suffer currently will be considered worthy to be in Jesus's presence and part of God's kingdom (1:5), but those who "do not obey the gospel" will receive punishment (1:8-9). The same dualism is apparent in chapter 2, for the believers are reminded that they were chosen by God for salvation (2:13), unlike those who "took pleasure in unrighteousness"—these people will be condemned (2:12).

In this final event, Jesus acts as God's eschatological agent, for it is God's righteous judgment (1:5-6) that Jesus enacts, and he also kills the man of lawlessness (himself an agent of Satan) for God as well (2:8). Additionally, Jesus brings glorification to believers in this event, sharing his glory with them (1:12; 2:14). At the same time, God is clearly directing the events—he sends a deceiving spirit so that nonbelievers will be condemned (2:11), he repays the audience's persecutors (1:6), he chooses the believers as "first fruits for salvation" (2:13), and he considers the believers worthy of his kingdom in the end (1:5). There is some overlap in function between the two, but the general picture is Jesus acting as God's agent. Thus, Jesus is not portrayed as the judge but as the agent who delivers the judgment that the judge (God) has decided.

As with 1 Thessalonians, it is difficult to perfectly reconstruct the situation presumed by this letter without deciding on authorship, but it is clear in chapter 1 that the audience is suffering affliction from another group of people, for the author comforts the audience by telling them God will indeed punish their persecutors in the end (1:6). At this same moment the audience will be vindicated. Thus, chapter 1 serves to reshape the audience's experience of suffering by vividly showing them this ultimate outcome. The community's present suffering also seems to be responsible for their susceptibility to an eschatological error that has caused them to become unsettled. They have interpreted their severe affliction as part of the increased lawlessness of the end, and in an atmosphere of increased eschatological expectation somehow a rumour has started that the day of the Lord has arrived (2:2). The best explanation for this misunderstanding and its deleterious effect on the community is that they understood the day of the Lord and the *parousia* to be two

separate events that occurred close together. They have now been told that one of those events—the day of the Lord—has come, likely because of a local disaster such as an earthquake or famine which served to some as proof that God's wrath had come. Yet, this supposed act of judgment had not brought an end to their sufferings and the promised *parousia* had not occurred. The author thus has to readjust their eschatological timeline, showing that their sufferings are not the final ones, but part of God's plan to purify them for the end (1:5) so that they may be considered worthy when Jesus comes. Furthermore, 2 Thessalonians indicates that the day of the Lord and the *parousia* are one in the same event—Jesus comes delivering both punishment and reward at the same time. Thus, the audience will indeed be vindicated in the end. There is a further issue in this letter of community members causing disorder within the community, but this does not seem to be related to the eschatological error nor to have any impact on the letter's eschatology.

Finally, in this analysis it has become clear that several significant components of 2 Thess 2 are modelled on Dan 7-12. The figure of the man of lawlessness is drawn from the "contemptible figure" of Dan 11:21-39, who profanes the temple (11:31) and exalts himself above any other god (11:36). Additionally, the "restrainer" is best understood as Michael in light of Dan 12:1. Furthermore, the ἄνομος language used of God's opponent in 2 Thess 2 is paralleled in TH Dan 11:32 and 12:10. This all suggests that Daniel was a significant influence for the letter's eschatological thought. In connection with this conclusion, I also observed several connections between 2 Thessalonians and the Synoptic eschatological discourse, which is also rife with Daniel allusions. The ἐπισυναγωγή of 2:1 is the same idea as that portrayed in Mark 13:36 and Matt 24:31, using the verbal form, ἐπισυνάγω. Both

2 Thessalonians and the Synoptic Gospels contain a command to not be alarmed, using the rare word θροέω. These connections have raised significant questions for the relationship of 2 Thessalonians to the Synoptic Gospels and to the shared material with Daniel; these questions will be explored in chapter 4.

In conclusion, in chapter 2 I have produced a close analysis of the eschatological passages of 2 Thessalonians. It is clear that the letter presents one decisive eschatological event, but it uses a variety of terms to describe this from different perspectives, including Jesus's ἀποκάλυψις, the *parousia*, and the day of the Lord. It shows that these all relate to the same moment when Jesus comes, bringing punishment to God's enemies and glory to believers. Thus, 2 Thessalonians highlights two possible eschatological fates, demonstrating a consistent dualism throughout between those who will be considered worthy to experience Jesus's glory (1:12) and those who will be separated from his presence (1:9). Jesus is the agent of this judgment, delivering God's sentence to the world when he arrives. However, God is ultimately responsible for both judgment and glorification. Finally, the author communicates this eschatological material for two reasons: comforting a suffering community and correcting a false eschatological understanding. For this reason, eschatological judgment and vindication both play a significant role in the eschatology of 2 Thessalonians.

CHAPTER 3: COMPARING ESCHATOLOGIES

One of the main arguments made against the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians is that its eschatological account is incompatible with that of 1 Thessalonians. As Richard notes, "From the outset scholars have recognized serious difficulties posed, among other issues, by the eschatology of 1 Thess 4:13-5:11 which presumes the Lord's imminent return and 2 Thess 2:1-12 which attempts to dispel such a notion."[1] Similarly, Linda McKinnish Bridges observes, "In 1 Thessalonians the end is near. In 2 Thessalonians, however, the end is way out of sight!"[2] In the previous two chapters I examined all the eschatological sections of both 1 and 2 Thessalonians and created syntheses of their respective eschatologies. In this chapter, I will compare the two eschatologies with each other with the goal of determining whether the accounts are compatible or not.[3]

However, a judgment on the compatibility or incompatibility of these two letters cannot provide an answer to the question of authorship. A pseudonymous letter may well be compatible for the very reason that it is intentionally trying to sound like a genuine work. On the other hand, a pseudonymous letter could be incompatible because the author attempts to correct what he or she sees as incorrect information in the original letter. Either of these situations could easily apply to 2 Thessalonians. Thus, if 2 Thessalonians were

[1] Richard, *Thessalonians*, 19. Schmidt "Vermutungen," 159-161, was the first to claim these two eschatological accounts contradicted one another. While he believed the rest of 2 Thessalonians was probably written by Paul, he claimed 2:1-12 was a later insertion because of these inconsistencies.

[2] Linda McKinnish Bridges, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, SHBC (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2008), 196.

[3] "Compatible" should be understood here in the sense "mutually tolerant; capable of being admitted together, or of existing together in the same subject; accordant, consistent, congruous, agreeable" (OED, s.v. "compatible," 2a).

judged to be compatible with 1 Thessalonians it would not automatically require us to accept genuine authorship. However, neither is incompatibility proof of pseudonymity. For example, Menken argues that the eschatology issue on its own is not strong enough to support pseudonymity, but in combination with the other issues of literary dependence and tone it is additional evidence against authenticity.[4] If the following comparison demonstrates that the two eschatologies are incompatible with each other, Paul could still be accepted as the author on other arguments. Therefore, the conclusions of this chapter do not determine authorship one way or the other. Instead, the focus is simply on a detailed comparison of both eschatological accounts.

COMPARISON, COMPATIBILITY, AND COHERENCE

Before the task of comparison can begin, we must ask what precisely we are claiming when we compare two things, or when we claim that something cannot be compared. In an article in the delightfully absurd journal, *Annals of Improbable Research*, NASA scientist Scott Sandford questioned the legitimacy of an objection he received that he was "comparing apples and oranges."[5] Defiantly, he decided to do just that, for, as he claims, "it is not difficult to demonstrate that apples and oranges can, in fact, be compared."[6] He took samples of a Granny Smith apple and a Sunkist Navel orange, desiccated them, pressed the powder into pellets, and took spectra of the two. He concluded, "Not only was this

[4] Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 29.
[5] Scott A. Sandford, "Apples and Oranges: A Comparison," *The Best of Annals of Improbable Research*, ed. Marc Abrahams (New York: Freeman and Company, 1998), 93-94.
[6] Ibid., 93.

comparison easy to make, but it is apparent from the figure that apples and oranges are very similar. Thus, it would appear that the comparing apples and oranges defense should no longer be considered valid."[7] Sandford's point, while obviously exaggerated for comic effect, is perceptive: in reality, anything can be compared, for comparison is a mental task; it is a process of taking two or more objects, observing them side by side, and highlighting their similarities and differences. Comparison, thus, gives us an understanding of objects in relation to each other. As Jonathan Z. Smith articulates,

> There is nothing 'natural' about the enterprise of comparison. Similarity and difference are not 'given.' They are the result of mental operations.... Comparison, in its strongest form, brings differences together within the space of the scholar's mind for the scholar's own intellectual reasons. It is the scholar who makes their cohabitation—their 'sameness'—possible, not 'natural' affinities or processes of history.[8]

However, even though anything can technically be compared, comparison does not inherently provide useful information. For example, Jacob Neusner highlights,

> Apples and Australians are alike and may be compared and contrasted because they both begin with an A.... So apples are like Australians in that they come from Australia, and apples are not like Australians in that they have stems.... We can go on making such perspicacious observations. But so what? That information leads us deep into an unending wonderland of odd information.[9]

Sandford's comparison of apples and oranges in reality tells us nothing useful, other than calling into question the logic of a common idiom. However, comparing apples and

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[7] Ibid., 93. Sanford also, satirically, concludes, "This is a somewhat startling revelation. It can be anticipated to have a dramatic effect on the strategies used in arguments and discussion in the future."

[8] Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity*, JLCRS 14 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 51.

[9] Jacob Neusner, *Comparative Midrash: The Plan and Program of Genesis Rabbah and Leviticus Rabbah*, BJS 111 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 7.

oranges makes far more sense than comparing apples and Australia, since we can classify both apples and oranges as "fruit" and gain useful information from comparing them, such as relative sugar content or taste. Thus, apples and oranges can indeed be compared, for they belong to a common classification and are thus similar enough that certain differences observed in a comparison can have significance. Neusner stands in contrast to Smith, arguing,

> Comparison and contrast depend, in strict logic, upon prior identification of appropriate commonalities. The genus comes before the species. When we know that in consequential ways things are alike, we then can discover in what ways they are not alike. We further can derive further insight from the points in common and the differences as well. We cannot ask how things differ if we do not know that there is a basis for the question of comparison and contrast. And the point of distinction between one thing and another thing must be shown to make a difference.[10]

So, a valid comparison should start with two objects that are similar enough to be meaningfully compared in the first place—contra Smith—and that, when compared, might provide some useful information (however one may want to define that). In the present case, the reasons for comparing 1 and 2 Thessalonians should be obvious: both are early Christian letters claiming to be by the same author(s), both are putatively addressed to the same community, and both are representative of early Christian eschatological thought. Furthermore, the eschatology of the two letters remains one of the key battlegrounds in understanding how they relate to each other. By comparing them, we can better understand their relationship as well as gain insight into possible similarities and differences in early Christian eschatology.

[10] Ibid., 8.

Comparing two ancient letters from the same religious tradition (or, if both genuine, indeed from the same person), written in the same century, is in some ways an easier task than comparing different religious traditions (as Smith does) or midrashim from both Jewish and Christian perspectives (as Neusner does). There will be certain characteristics they naturally share, such as their first century Graeco-Roman context and their presence within the Pauline corpus. However, given the disputed nature of 2 Thessalonians, the assumed similarities between 1 and 2 Thessalonians are necessarily more limited than they would be in a comparison of two genuine letters. Comparison can still, of course, take place. They are after all both early Christian letters that were accepted into the Christian canon, so any comparison of them can provide useful information about the earliest forms of Christian belief and practice. The problem arises when we turn to the results of the comparison and ask whether or not the accounts are compatible, for this raises multiple questions: What level of coherence[11] is required for two early Christian letters to be considered compatible? Is there a set number of elements that must be the same between two accounts for them to be regarded as consistent with each other? Among those commentators who have claimed the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians are incompatible, none, to my knowledge, have provided a definition or criteria for what does

[11] In classical logic, the coherence theory of truth is "A theory of truth according to which a statement is true if it 'coheres' with other statements—false if it does not. Some criticisms focus on what 'cohere' means—'is consistent with' appears too weak, 'entails and is entailed by', too strong" (Sybil Wolfram, "coherence theory of truth," in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995], 140). This definition fits with Beker's understanding of coherence as the "inner consistency of Paul's thought" (367) or "the stable, constant, cohesive element which expresses the convictional basis of Paul's proclamation of the gospel" (368) in J. C. Beker, "Paul's Theology: Consistent or Inconsistent?" *NTS* 34 (1988): 364-377.

and does not count as "compatible." Rather, a few select parts of the eschatologies are singled out and pitted against each other in order to prove the incompatibility of the two letters; this is usually done in the service of establishing the inauthenticity of 2 Thessalonians. The problem is that compatibility, when dealing with texts, is unquantifiable. Compatibility assumes that the two objects are distinguishable from each other, meaning there must be a certain amount of difference between them; yet, at the same time, they must be similar enough to work together. The subjectivity of this judgment is the key problem of compatibility. How different is too different, and exactly how similar must they be?

This discussion is closely connected with how we understand Paul's theology as a whole. Should we expect him to be consistent across all his work? Was he a coherent thinker? Heikki Räisänen famously argued that Paul was not a consistent thinker and that many aspects of his letters are contradictory, especially his thoughts on the law.[12] In response to Räisänen, Dunn argues, "It is simply a matter of respect for our subject matter and for the sheer stature of the man that we should assume an essential coherence to his thought and praxis, unless proved otherwise."[13] Räisänen does agree that Paul held some key ideas on which his perspective never changed.[14] However, more important for Räisänen are the conflicting convictions he detects at the heart of Paul's thought, which are evident in significant contradictions both between and within Paul's letters. If Räisänen's view is

[12] Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*.

[13] James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 23.

[14] Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, xxiii n46: "*some* things never changed in Paul's mind—for example the idea that God wanted to save all humans through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

held, then one does not have to expect the eschatologies of two of Paul's letters to be compatible with each other; in fact, even the eschatology of just one of the letters could be internally inconsistent. On the other hand, eschatology theoretically could be one of the key topics on which Paul was consistent. However, scholars have asked whether Räisänen's "fair comparison" approach[15] really is that fair to Paul in the end, for by expecting inconsistency he finds it wherever he looks.[16]

On the other hand, some scholars propose that there is a central, organising principle in Paul's thought, from which the rest of Paul's theology flows. Bultmann, for example, writes, "The way in which he [Paul] reduces specific acute questions to a basic theological question, the way in which he reaches concrete decisions on the basis of fundamental theological considerations, shows that what he thinks and says grows out of his basic theological position—the position which is more or less completely set forth in Romans."[17] One problem with this approach, however, is that it does not allow room for the distinctive elements of the individual letters and puts too much weight on Romans. J. Christiaan Beker presents a more nuanced view that Paul's thought was marked by "contingency and coherence" and the interaction between the two.[18] He argues that Paul

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[15] Ibid., 15.

[16] Cf. C. E. B. Cranfield, "Giving a Dog a Bad Name: A Note on H. Räisänen's *Paul and the Law*," *JSNT* 38 (1990): 77-85. Richard B. Hays, review of *Paul and the Law*, by Heikki Räisänen in *JAAR* 53 (1985): 513-515: "Räisänen opts for the reading which maximizes the radical tension in Paul's understanding of the Law" (515).

[17] Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel, 2 vols. (London: SCM, 1952-1955), 1:190.

[18] J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980), 11-19; "Paul's Theology," 367-371. A similar argument was earlier made by Leander E. Keck in *Paul and His Letters* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979): "Because Paul's letters are not treatises in theology but pastoral letters occasioned by particular problems, he did not identify his governing assumptions; nor did he usually indicate the logical connections between them.

had a coherent centre of his understanding of the gospel, which must be understood as a symbolic structure: "It is in this sense that I speak about the coherent center of Paul's gospel as a symbolic structure: it is a Christian apocalyptic structure of thought—derived from a constitutive primordial experience [Paul's call] and delineating the Christ-event in its meaning for the apocalyptic consummation of history, that is, in its meaning for the triumph of God."[19] As he clarifies in a later article "By 'coherence' I mean the stable, constant, cohesive element which expresses the convictional basis of Paul's proclamation of the gospel, i.e. 'the truth of the gospel.'"[20] By "the truth of the gospel" Beker means "the apocalyptic interpretation of the cross and resurrection of Christ."[21] From this apocalyptic understanding, according to Beker, Paul then expressed himself in relation to the contingent needs of his audiences. Thus, his message took on different forms and he used different language depending on the particular situations into which he wrote; yet, behind each of these different messages was Paul's coherent, apocalyptic centre. Beker has received criticism because his "programmatic statements in the introduction and the

Ascertaining the deeper coherence of his thought therefore entails certain risks. One may unwittingly impose one's own sense of coherence on Paul; one may also end up making Paul more systematic than he really was" (65). Keck then focuses on three motifs which, according to him, get at the "deeper logic" of Paul's gospel: the sovereign freedom of God, creation and new creation, and participation and anticipation and shows how these worked out in the particular situations of the different letters. However, the "coherence and contingency" model continues to be most associated with Beker.

[19] Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 16.

[20] Beker, "Paul's Theology," 368.

[21] Ibid., 369.

conclusion appear more convincing than their actual execution."[22] However, the basic framework of Beker's coherence and contingency model continues to find broad support.[23]

The SBL Pauline Theology Consultation—of which Beker was a part—began in 1985 and centred around the key questions of how Paul's theology was to be articulated. The method agreed upon by this group was to examine each letter on its own terms, without influence from the other letters, before moving to a synthesis of Pauline theology as a whole.[24] In many ways, this was a helpful approach as certain emphases of particular letters came to the front which had previously been subsumed under larger Pauline theology approaches. This method also highlighted how dynamic Paul's theology was, responding to the various situations of his different communities. However, this group was not able to provide a successful synthesis of Pauline theology after these individual studies. In the final volume, Paul Meyer admits that "the task of understanding the apostle's theology remains unfinished," for "there is no consensus at the end of this stage of the inquiry" about what is meant by "Pauline theology."[25] In spite of this failure to meet their original goal, the consultation produced valuable work on distinctive elements within the

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[22] H. D. Betz, review of *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*," *JR* 61 (1981): 457-459, 458.

[23] Robert Jewett, review of *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*, by J. Christiaan Beker, *ThTo* 38 (1981): 194-198, for example, despite finding flaws in some of the execution of Beker's arguments, declares, "I do not think it is an exaggeration to claim that Beker provides the most adequate, comprehensive categories ever developed to view the theology of Paul" (396). See also J. L Martyn, Review of *Paul the Apostle* in *WW* 2 (1982): 194-198; Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 23; N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 1-2.

[24] *Pauline Theology I*, ed. Bassler, x.

[25] Paul W. Meyer, "Pauline Theology: A Proposal for a Pause in Its Pursuit," in *Pauline Theology. Volume IV: Looking Back, Pressing On*, ed. E. Elizabeth Johnson and David M. Hay, SBLSymS 4 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 140-160, 140.

Pauline letters and demonstrated the need "to conceive of Paul's theology as the resulting outcome rather than as the starting-point of his theological activity."[26]

Partially in response to this program, James Dunn, in his *Theology of Paul*, identified Romans as "the most sustained and reflective statement of Paul's own theology by Paul himself" and so framed his whole synthesis around Romans.[27] It is true that Romans is likely to contain fuller expressions of Paul's theology than his other letters, for he cannot assume the same foundational teachings in a community which he did not establish. However, Romans is also not a complete treatment of Paul's theology, and so a theology of Paul based on this letter will either have to leave out key information from other letters or artificially introduce these extraneous topics. For example, in Dunn's work the *parousia* receives an extensive treatment despite being absent from Romans. This illustrates the problem of Dunn's approach.[28] Romans simply cannot give the whole picture of Paul's theology, for it is still a contingent letter that treats only selected topics.

Douglas Campbell takes up the gauntlet in *The Quest for Paul's Gospel*. While acknowledging that Romans contains the fullest account of Paul's theology, he avoids Dunn's mistake and allows room for the distinctive insights of the other letters in his account of Paul's theology.[29] Campbell argues for a "pneumatologically participatory

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[26] Ibid., 159.

[27] Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 25.

[28] Dunn notes, "We have strayed some distance from the course of Paul's own exposition in Romans. But it was necessary to do so if we are to gain a clear impression of the coherence of Paul's Christology.... There is one other element in Paul's Christology which takes us still further from the course of Romans. That is the coming (again) of the exalted Christ. But it is equally necessary that we look at it here and thus round out our picture of Paul's Christology" (ibid., 294-295).

[29] Douglas A. Campbell, *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy*, JSNTSup 274 (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 23: "we must let Romans inform our analysis of Paul's other letters where that is

martyrological eschatology" (PPME) as the heart of Paul's gospel, particularly in contrast to a Lutheran "justification by faith" model.[30] He further argues that the PPME model as an overarching framework is compatible with contingency, for it "reduces many of Paul's texts traditionally associated with general, theological matters to more localized discussions; hence the strategy ultimately *depends* quite heavily *on* contingency."[31] Thus, Campbell continues to support the coherent and contingent strategy championed by Beker, though he modifies it in important ways. In the first place, Campbell argues that Beker's process is too simplistic, for Beker jumps immediately from contingency to coherence. Instead, Campbell suggests, "we must unpack the contingency of Paul's texts, step by step, and so uncover his coherence within them."[32] It is through this process that Campbell comes to his PPME model. While there may be much to question about Campbell's ultimate results, his process is certainly commendable.

The presupposition of many "theologies of Paul" is that, at some level, Paul is a coherent thinker.[33] This assumption is also the foundation of comparisons between Paul's

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needed, but also refuse to let the distinctive contributions of those other letters be overridden or inappropriately harmonized."

[30] Ibid., 4. Campbell does much more to flesh out what his PPME model looks like in his colossal *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

[31] Ibid., 12.

[32] Ibid., 20.

[33] As mentioned above, Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 23, assumes an essential coherence in Paul's thought. See also, Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, translated by John Richard De Witt (London: SPCK, 1977), 39, who locates "the point of departure for an adequate approach to the whole in the *redemptive-historical, eschatological character of Paul's proclamation*.... It is this great redemptive-historical framework within which the whole of Paul's preaching must be understood and all of its subordinate parts receive their place and organically cohere." The tide is beginning to turn, though, as more recent tomes such as Udo Schnelle's *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology*, translated by M. Eugene Boring (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005) and E. P. Sanders's *Paul: The Apostle's Life, Letters, and Thoughts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), focus on a

letters. Räisänen provides a needed challenge to this perspective by pointing out inconsistencies in Paul's arguments. His work is a reminder that Paul's thought is not static and it is highly influenced by his desire to change his audience's behaviour or to more clearly articulate something that has been misunderstood. Thus, depending on the argument he is trying to make, Paul may seem to contradict himself. Ultimately, however, a coherent and contingent model is the most convincing. This is not to say, however, that his thought did not develop at all in response to controversies or confusion in his communities, but previous schemes of drastic development in his thought are untenable.[34] However, as the Pauline Theology consultation discovered and Campbell reiterated, scholars can miss the distinctive elements of each letter if they move to synthesis too quickly. For this reason, my method of research has broadly followed in the footsteps of the consultation by individually evaluating 1 and 2 Thessalonians before moving on to a comparison of the two.

This discussion has, so far, mainly focussed on coherence across letters that are considered genuinely Pauline. Yet, when comparing an undisputed letter with one that is

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historical presentation of Paul's thought that is not as concerned with painting a coherent picture of Paul.

[34] As Jouette Bassler, "Paul's Theology: Whence and Wither?" in *Pauline Theology. Volume II: 1 and 2 Corinthians*, ed. David M. Hay, SBLSymS 22 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993; repr. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 3-17, observes, "First, Paul was *not* a systematic theologian. Thus, we are not looking for a theological or doctrinal system to emerge from his letters, nor are we seeking to impose such a system on them. Yet the deconstructive analyses of recent years that deny all coherence to Paul's thought seem to go too far in the opposite direct. If Paul was not a systematic theologian, there seems nevertheless to be a pattern, a center, a commitment, a conviction, a vision, a underlying structure, a core communication, a set of beliefs, a narrative, a coherence—something—in Paul's thoughts or behind them that dispels any abiding sense of mere opportunism or intellectual chaos on the part of the apostle. Yet nowhere, it seems, does this core, center, vision, etc. come to expression in a noncontingent way" (6).

disputed, or two disputed letters with each other, the same approach cannot necessarily be employed. As discussed above, compatibility is always a value judgment. The discussion of the coherence of Paul's theology proves this—Beker wants to detect a coherent theology, so even those elements that do not seem compatible can in fact be reconciled in view of this overarching coherence. Räisänen, on the other hand, argues that these incompatible elements should not be reconciled, and, therefore, he understands Paul as an inconsistent thinker. Thus, even in a comparison of the genuine letters there is disagreement over whether or not their theological perspectives are compatible. The question is even more complicated when dealing with disputed letters—should we expect compatibility or incompatibility? Realistically, we should expect either since there are different kinds of pseudepigrapha, though if the authorship question is decided before a detailed examination of the letter, we can often be blinded to those parts that are either similar or different to the genuine letters (depending on our perspective). Therefore, in a comparison of disputed letters it is important, in the first instance, to leave the authorship question open. Additionally, as Neusner argues, "Before we can compare, we have to describe the things we propose to compare with each other."[35] This is precisely the task which has been undertaken in the previous two chapters. I examined each of the eschatological passages in 1 and 2 Thessalonians in detail, independently of one another. In these chapters, I outlined the eschatological framework of each letter, synthesising the multiple elements into five key categories that appear in the two texts: terminology, timing, eschatological fates, agency, and circumstances for writing. Now it remains to compare these two letters

[35] Neusner, *Comparative Midrash*, 13.

in each of these aspects. The letters will be judged compatible if, in each of these categories, the two accounts can both be true at the same time. I am not looking for identical thought here, but rather ideas that can be held together, that could conceivably come from the same author in response to different situations.

COMPARING 1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS

Terminology

One important area of comparison is that of the key terms used in 1 and 2 Thessalonians. What words are used to speak about the final eschatological event, and are they used in a compatible manner across the two accounts? In the examination of 1 Thessalonians, it was determined that the author uses both *parousia* and "the day of the Lord" to refer to the decisive point in the eschaton, though they are used in different ways in these letters. In 1 Thessalonians *parousia* is the more common term, occurring four times, and it is always used in reference to believers. In 2:19, the focus is on how the audience will be a "crown of boasting" at Jesus's *parousia*. In 3:13, there is a prayer that they be found "blameless in holiness" at the *parousia*. In 5:23, there is another prayer for the blamelessness of the audience at the Lord Jesus's *parousia*. Each of these uses appears at the end of a section, highlighting the eschatological focus of the letter. In each of these occurrences, *parousia* is connected with standing in Jesus and/or God's presence. The most extended discussion of the *parousia* occurs in 4:13-18. In his *parousia* Jesus will descend from heaven accompanied by trumpets and fanfare. Dead believers will be raised and then all believers will be caught up and eternally united to Jesus. The Lord Jesus will descend to the earth, announced by

the fanfare of trumpets. In all of these uses throughout 1 Thessalonians, the emphasis is on the Lord's coming. It is a moment of rescue and joy for believers, when they are united with their Lord forever.

It is only in chapter 5 of 1 Thessalonians that the author speaks of "the day of the Lord." In this context, it is presented as a time of wrath that will come upon nonbelievers, from which believers will escape. Those outside the community, the ones who currently proclaim "peace and security," will be destroyed. Though these people think they are safe, they will be surprised on the day of the Lord. Just as a thief comes in the night, when no one is aware of his presence, so the day of the Lord will sneak up on such people, bringing them to ruin. They will not be able to escape. In contrast, believers "are not in the darkness for the day to overtake you like a thief." It is not that believers do not experience the day of the Lord, but that they are not destroyed by it as nonbelievers are. Instead, as 5:9 shows, God "did not choose [believers] for wrath but for the obtaining of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ."

However, 1 Thessalonians also describes the eschatological event without either of these two terms. For example, 1 Thess 1:10 clearly indicates the *parousia* when it says, "to wait for his son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who saves us from the coming wrath." This matches the imagery of chapter 4, so it is reasonable to conclude it is the same event. In 1 Thessalonians *parousia* is used specifically to denote the moment of Jesus's return to earth, following the "coming of God" tradition of the Jewish scriptures.[36] "The day of the Lord," on the other hand, seems to refer specifically the event of God's wrath

[36] Cf Edward Adams, "'Coming of God' Tradition," 1-19.

being poured out. However, as was seen in chapter 1, these terms are co-referential, simply highlighting two different parts of that singular eschatological event.

As discussed in the previous chapter, both *parousia* and "the day of the Lord" only appear in 2 Thess 2. In 2:1, the author writes of "the coming [παρουσίας] of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering [ἐπισυναγωγῆς] to him." Jesus's *parousia* is here connected with the gathering of God's people, demonstrated by the shared definite article. This is similar to the imagery of 1 Thess 4:17, where believers are likewise gathered to Jesus when he descends from heaven, though the terms of gathering are different: ἁρπάζω in 1 Thess 4:17 and ἐπισυναγωγή in 2 Thess 2:1. Yet, the same idea of eschatological gathering is still present in both passages. In 2 Thess 2:8, *parousia* also designates the moment when Jesus will bring destruction upon the lawless one, through "the appearance [ἐπιφάνεια] of his coming [παρουσίας]." In this verse, ἐπιφάνεια indicates the visible nature of Jesus's coming, which brings the lawless one's activity to an end. Thus, Jesus's coming also brings God's judgment upon the lawless one and those who have been deceived by him. Second Thessalonians also refers to Jesus's coming as an ἀποκάλυψις, a "revelation" or "unveiling" (1:7); this is clearly the same as the *parousia* because in this moment Jesus brings destruction to God's enemies and glorification to God's people. Thus, 2 Thessalonians can speak of the eschatological event with a variety of terms.

The day of the Lord is not further described in 2 Thessalonians apart from the denial that it has come; it is, however, directly connected to the *parousia* as seen in 2:1-2, possibly for the very reason that the use of the two terms in 1 Thessalonians had been misunderstood by some in the community. Additionally, 1:10 speaks of "that day," which is

likely shorthand for day of the Lord—and this day is the same as Jesus's ἀποκάλυψις. Thus, ἀποκάλυψις, *parousia*, ἐπιφάνεια, and day of the Lord all refer to the same moment when Jesus comes, bringing both destruction and glorification. At the moment that believers are gathered to enjoy Jesus's presence, that same presence punishes nonbelievers, separating them from the kingdom of God.

This is, then, a difference between 1 and 2 Thessalonians, for in 1 Thessalonians the two terms were used to designate different aspects, though there is no indication that they actually are meant to signify different events.[37] This difference in how the terms have been used, however, does not indicate an incompatibility in the picture painted of the end by both letters. Instead, if the audience of 2 Thessalonians had misunderstood the day of the Lord to be an event of wrath separate from the *parousia*, as argued in chapter 2, then it makes sense that the author responds by connecting the two terms and further highlighting that both aspects—judgment and vindication—come at the same time, when Jesus returns. Ultimately, in both accounts there is one eschatological event which can be described with different words or phrases depending on which aspect the author wants to highlight.

Timing

The most common argument against Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians relates to the supposed inconsistency in eschatological timelines between 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Ehrman, for example, has argued,

[37] Contra Holland, *Tradition*, 104-105.

> If Paul is right in what he says in 1 Thess. 5:2 that they themselves 'know well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night,' then it is well nigh impossible to understand how he can then tell them in 2 Thessalonians that the coming will not be sudden and unexpected, like a thief. It won't be like that at all, but will be anticipated by clear signs to all who can see. For 2 Thessalonians the coming of the Lord will not be like a burglar after dark; it will be like the much anticipated and broadcast arrival of a king.[38]

However, this argument does not stand up to scrutiny. In the first place, 1 Thess 5 does not present an unexpected advent of the day of the Lord. While 5:2 does say that "the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night," implying unexpectedness, it is nonbelievers who will be surprised and destroyed. Those who are currently proclaiming "peace and security" will be overtaken by disaster on the day of the Lord. They are the ones who experience it coming like a thief in the night. In contrast, 5:4 explicitly says that believers will not experience the day overtaking them like a thief. Thus, they will not be destroyed by its arrival. The author further urges believers to keep watch and be aware so that they are indeed prepared for this day. Therefore, while believers do not know the precise moment at which the day of the Lord will arrive, when it does come they will not be overtaken.

Though 2 Thess 2 highlights two events that must occur before the day of the Lord comes, it does not state that these signs will immediately precede it, and it is not clear how close these events will be temporally to the day of the Lord. Rather, the point is that several things must happen before that day comes and because those events have not yet occurred it is impossible that the day of the Lord could have arrived. As in 1 Thessalonians, in

[38] Bart Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 166.

2 Thessalonians it is only believers who will be aware of the significance of the events preceding the final event. Nonbelievers, on the other hand, will be deceived by the signs and wonders of the lawless one. They will be beguiled and tricked by this figure, and the moment of judgment will come upon them suddenly and unexpectedly. This is precisely why the author warns the community, for they are in fact currently being deceived by the rumours about the day of the Lord. As discussed in chapter 2, some members of the Thessalonian community seem to have misinterpreted certain contemporary events (perhaps earthquakes or famine) as a sign that the day of the Lord had come, and the whole group is troubled because the promised *parousia* of Jesus that should accompany it and end their trials still has not happened. The author wants to restore hope to them in the midst of their suffering—the day of the Lord has indeed not come, so their hope for redemption is not in vain. God has chosen them for salvation and that promise will be fulfilled. This is similar to the issue in 1 Thessalonians—both letters deal with the delay or nonarrival of the *parousia*. Both letters encourage their audience(s) to stand firm and maintain hope for that day of salvation. Furthermore, both letters teach that, if they stand firm and keep watch, believers will not be overtaken by the arrival of the day of the Lord; meanwhile, it is nonbelievers who will be deceived by the events leading up to the day of the Lord and who will face sudden and unexpected destruction when it arrives.

While the timing of the events can be reconciled, it could be argued that the author of 1 Thessalonians believed this event would happen at any moment while the author of 2 Thessalonians pushed it into the future, dampening—though not extinguishing—his

audience's eschatological expectations.[39] In 1 Thess 4:17, it does seem that the author believes he will still be alive at Jesus's *parousia*, as he places himself in the group of "those who remain," rather than "those who have fallen asleep." This, does not, however, mean he believes it is immediate, by which I mean "about to happen," or "just around the corner." In fact, it seems he believes there is still a period of time before the day of the Lord in which the audience needs to live quiet and holy lives (4:10-12) and he does qualify his earlier statement of "we who remain" with 5:10: "whether we keep watch or sleep [die] we may live with [the Lord]." Furthermore, while the author emphasises the suddenness of the event in 5:3, he does not mention that it is about to happen nor does he give an indication that he knows precisely when it will occur, though as stated he certainly seems to expect it within his lifetime. In 2 Thessalonians, there is not a direct statement that the author believes he and his readers will still be alive by the time the day of the Lord comes, but neither is there a denial that this is the case. This could indicate that he wants to push the eschatological events far into the future, but it does not demand that interpretation. On the other hand, in 2 Thess 1:6-7 the author describes the vengeance that will come upon the audience's persecutors and the rest the audience will receive when Jesus comes, which could indicate his belief that this would happen within the audience's lifetime. However, there is not a clear-cut statement either way. Ultimately, neither 1 nor 2 Thessalonians presents the day of the Lord as an event that will happen in the immediate future—both

[39] See Richard, *Thessalonians*, 19; Edgar M. Krentz, "Thessalonians, First and Second Epistles to the," *ABD* 6:515-523, 521; Boring, *Thessalonians*, 271-279.

are agnostic about when, precisely, it will occur. In regard to timing, then, the two letters present compatible accounts.

Eschatological Fates

It has been argued that 2 Thessalonians has a harsher tone and is more focused on vengeance than 1 Thessalonians.[40] The letter certainly does speak vividly of the punishment of nonbelievers. In 2 Thess 1:6, the author assures his audience that God will pay back with affliction those who have been afflicting them. In 2 Thess 1:7-9, Jesus's *parousia* is connected with the infliction of vengeance on nonbelievers, who "will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction" (1:9). Furthermore, in 2:11-12, God sends a delusion to nonbelievers that leads them to believe falsehood for the very purpose that they would be condemned at the end. Thus, 2 Thessalonians has an abundance of references to the judgment and destruction of nonbelievers. However, this theme is not absent from 1 Thessalonians. From the beginning of 1 Thessalonians, God's wrath is a central concept—in 1:10 we read of "Jesus who saves us from the coming wrath." In 1 Thess 2:16, in vividly antagonistic language, we hear of the wrath which has come upon the Jews who prevented the spread of the gospel. In 4:6, the Thessalonians are warned that "the Lord is an avenger." Most notably, 1 Thess 5:3 describes how the day of the Lord will bring swift and unexpected destruction to nonbelievers, while believers are saved from this wrath. The author does not provide an extensive treatment of what God's wrath looks like in 1 Thessalonians, but

[40] Krentz, "Thessalonians," 6:520-521; Trilling, *Untersuchungen zum zweiten Thessalonicherbrief*, 63-64; Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 31.

neither does the author of 2 Thessalonians. In fact, throughout Pauline literature there is no detailed discussion of what God's wrath looks like.[41]

Furthermore, throughout both letters there is a clear and consistent distinction between those within the believing community who will be brought into Jesus's presence and those outside the community who will be destroyed. In 1 Thessalonians, the day of the Lord is connected with the destruction of nonbelievers. As we see in 1 Thess 5:3, "When they say, 'Peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape." Those outside the community currently think they are protected and secure; however, their true fate is destruction on the day of the Lord. In contrast, believers are rescued from this judgment and destruction when Jesus comes. First Thessalonians 1:10 emphasises the hope that Jesus will rescue his people from God's coming wrath. Furthermore, 1 Thess 5:9 states, "God did not elect us for wrath but for the obtaining of salvation." Because they are set apart, believers escape destruction by God's wrath on the day of the Lord. Further, the author is sure of their election because, as he writes in 1:4-5: "For we know, brothers loved by God, your election [τὴν ἐκλογὴν ὑμῶν], because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit with full conviction." Their response to the gospel indicates their eschatological fate.

[41] In Romans 2:5-10, for example, the "day of wrath" consists of judgment, for each person will be repaid "according to his works." For the wicked this repayment is "wrath and anger" [ὀργὴ καὶ θυμός] while the righteous receive eternal life. There are no more specific details given beyond this.

In 2 Thess 1, the fate of the audience is also contrasted with that of their persecutors: while the persecutors will suffer God's punishment when Jesus comes (1:9), believers will receive rest (1:7). The result of this punishment is that nonbelievers will be separated from the Lord's presence and glory, whereas believers will be glorified with Jesus (1:12). Furthermore, in 2 Thess 2:13, after the description of how nonbelievers will be deceived by the man of lawlessness and so judged by God, the author contrasts how believers have been chosen (εἵλατο) by God "as the firstfruits of salvation through sanctification by the Spirit" (2:12). Believers will not be deceived because, unlike nonbelievers, they have chosen to love the truth (2:10). This is the same logic as in 1 Thessalonians—the author is assured of his audience's election to salvation by God because of their response to the gospel preached to them and the work of the Holy Spirit within them.

God's judgment is an important part of both eschatological accounts. In both letters there is a contrast between the fates of the believing community and those outside. The first group will live with their Lord forever (1 Thess 4:17; 5:10) while the second will be separated from his presence (2 Thess 1:9). The first group will receive glory and God's kingdom (1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 1:5, 12); the second group will receive destruction (1 Thess 5:3; 2 Thess 1:9). Thus, there are two opposite outcomes on the day of the Lord determined by one's response to the gospel. Furthermore, in both accounts the imagery of judgment is used to bolster the audience's confidence in the gospel message. In the midst of trials and persecution by outsiders, those inside the community are to remember what will happen

when their Lord returns—those opposed to God will ultimately face his wrath, while they will ultimately be vindicated.

Agency

A further argument made against the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians is that Jesus takes on many of the roles or attributes that, in the Jewish scriptures, are generally reserved for God.[42] For example, Jesus is clearly portrayed as the figure who enacts punishment against nonbelievers. He is described in 1:8 as returning "in a fire of flame, giving punishment to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus." Jesus is also responsible for killing the man of lawlessness, which he will accomplish through his *parousia* (2:8). Yet, it is clear that God is ultimately the one responsible for paying back the audience's persecutors (who are subsumed into the larger category of nonbelievers in this passage). In 1:6, the author claims "it is just for God to pay back with affliction those who are afflicting you," and this punishment is directly played out when Jesus is revealed, as stated in 1:7-8. Thus, Jesus enacts God's judgment.[43] Furthermore, in 2:11 God sends a deceiving power to those who do not believe the gospel so that they would believe falsehood, and so be condemned. This again demonstrates that God is the one responsible for judgment, with the results of his judgments being carried out by Jesus.

[42] For example, Boring, *Thessalonians*, 219, argues that in 2 Thessalonians "Old Testament attributes of God are increasingly attributed to Christ. This corresponds to the developing Christology within the postapostolic Pauline churches and their neighbors in the contemporary Johannine community."

[43] Compare 2 Cor 5:10: "For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or bad."

Throughout 2 Thessalonians, then, Jesus acts as God's agent, bringing vengeance on those opposed to God and peace and glory to God's people.[44] However, he is also different from Second Temple divine agents because the author describes him using texts that in their context refer to YHWH, such as Isa 2 and Isa 66.

In 1 Thessalonians Jesus also takes on many roles that are elsewhere assigned to God. In this letter Jesus is an agent of salvation; it is he who rescues believers from God's wrath (1:10). It may seem that God and Jesus are at cross-purposes, for in the day of the Lord God pours out his wrath, while in the *parousia* Jesus saves believers from this wrath, and so Jesus stands in God's way, in a sense. However, God is also portrayed as responsible for saving his people. It is he who "brings" the dead believers with Jesus at the *parousia* in 4:14. He is the one who sanctifies his people and keeps them blameless in 5:23. God is said to choose people for salvation in 5:9, though this salvation is accomplished *through* (διά) Jesus. Furthermore, the "Lord"—referring to Jesus—is called an avenger (ἔκδικος) in 4:6. He will bring vengeance upon those who do not live to please God. Both God and Jesus are involved in bringing wrath to nonbelievers and rescuing believers from that wrath, with Jesus particularly portrayed as God's agent, enacting his will.[45] However, there is also

[44] Cf. Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism*, 3rd ed., Cornerstones (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 73-103. God's "chief agent" or "principal angel" is a common motif in Second Temple Jewish texts, with figures like the "one like a son of man" in Dan 7, Michael as a "chief officer" of God in 2 En. 22:6; 33:10; 71:28; 72:5; Melchizedek in 11QMelch.

[45] Cf. Hurtado, "YHWH's Return to Zion," 434.

overlap in their two roles, as in 3:13 Jesus's *parousia* is equated with the day of YHWH from Zech 14:5.[46]

Both 1 and 2 Thessalonians portray God and Jesus as intimately involved in the eschatological event. In both letters, Jesus does take on roles that in the Jewish scriptures are often reserved for God, though in the Second Temple period many of these roles were also assumed by other chief agents of God. For example, in 1 Enoch there is a figure called the "Son of Man" or "the Elect one" who delivers both eschatological judgment and redemption on behalf of God (46:1-8; 48:4-10; 51:3-5; 52:4-9; 61:8-9; 62:7-16). Likewise, in both letters Jesus generally acts as an eschatological agent for God, fulfilling his will while God continues to have the predominant role.[47] Furthermore, as Hurtado argues, "The two christological emphases, Jesus acting in the role of YHWH and as the unique agent of YHWH, are not in tension in the NT, and should not be played off against the other."[48] Both God and Jesus are responsible for bringing wrath and vengeance to those opposed to God. At the same time, they are also both involved in rewarding believers. Thus, 1 and 2 Thessalonians are consistent in their portrayal of Jesus as the eschatological agent who executes God's will on the day he returns.[49]

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[46] Cf. Kreitzer's "referential shift" of "Lord" from God to Christ and the day of the Lord to the day of Jesus (*Jesus and God*, 113-126).

[47] Furthermore, as Hurtado, "YHWH's Return to Zion," 429, argues, "what we may call the christological discourse of the NT consistently portrays Jesus's significance with reference to God, positing Jesus as what we may term the unique agent of God's purposes."

[48] Ibid., 434.

[49] Niklas, "Intertextuality," 237, is certainly correct that, "2 Thess 1:5-12 uses a cluster of texts—in many cases related to "Day of the Lord"-traditions—and assigns qualities and activities of God, the Lord, to 'the Lord Jesus.'" He further claims that in 1:9, "The text goes at least (!) so far to leave the impression that what can be said about God, the Lord, can also be said about the Lord Jesus." He claims this as a significant piece of evidence for the pseudonymity of 2 Thessalonians. However, Nicklas overlooks the fact that in other letters Paul can easily apply day of YHWH texts

Circumstances for Writing

Even if the details of the two accounts are not logically inconsistent, there may be a significant enough difference between the circumstances for writing each letter that they should be seen as empirically incompatible. For example, Margaret Mitchell argues, "The historical context presumed by the second letter would require the Thessalonians to have shifted 180 degrees in their theological outlook: they were now being tempted to believe that 'the day of the Lord had (already) come' (2:2), whereas in the first letter it was the non-arrival of the promised parousia which had caused them such grief."[50] She argues that these contexts are too different to reflect the experiences of the same community in such a short span of time and so 2 Thessalonians must be pseudonymous.

The circumstances for writing 1 and 2 Thessalonians obviously cannot be perfectly determined as there is so little material with which we can work. However, we can figure out some information from the arguments in each letter, as attempted in the preceding chapters. In 1 Thess 4, the author turns to consider a particular issue related to believers who had died. The main point of his argument is that believers who are still alive when Jesus comes will not be at an advantage over those who have died, for the dead will be raised when he comes and both living and dead will be caught up together and united with their Lord. Thus, the issue troubling the audience must have had something to do with a fear that dead believers would in some way miss out on experiencing Jesus's *parousia*.

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to Jesus without thereby conflating the two figures and that other Second Temple texts easily incorporate an eschatological agent who often carries out many of God's roles, such as judgment. Hurtado's comments above are apt.

[50] Margaret M. Mitchell, "1 and 2 Thessalonians," in *The Cambridge Companion to St Paul*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 51-63, 59.

In 2 Thess 2:2, the author spells out the position against which he is arguing. He writes to refute those who have claimed that the day of the Lord has already arrived. As indicated in the previous chapter, some interpreters have struggled to see how the audience could have believed the day of the Lord had literally arrived and so have suggested that instead it meant the day of the Lord was imminent. However, this teaching has clearly disturbed—not excited—the audience. It is obvious from 2 Thess 1:4 that the audience is currently suffering and they may have interpreted the increased persecution as a sign they were in the lead up to the end, based on previous eschatological teaching. In the midst of this increased eschatological expectation, somehow a false teaching started that claimed the day of the Lord had arrived in the form of a local disaster, but the *parousia* had not followed this event. In 2:1-2, it seems that the *parousia* and Jesus's gathering of his believers is the issue at stake, for the author urges the audience not to be shaken in their belief that Jesus would return and that salvation would come. This would explain why the community was frightened by the false rumour rather than rejoicing in the arrival of the day of the Lord. Their rescuer had not come, and their continued suffering would not be vindicated. The author corrects this false understanding by adjusting their eschatological timeline and demonstrating that their present tribulations are part of God's plan to purify them (1:5).

In reply to Mitchell's argument, then, the historical contexts presumed by the two letters do not inherently require two separate authors. The issue in the first letter is the Thessalonians have lost hope for those within their community who have died before Jesus's return—they are not concerned about their own fate. The author's response is,

firstly, to show them that the dead would be raised as a result of the *parousia* and so would not be disadvantaged and, secondly, to encourage them to persevere in faith, being prepared for the arrival of the day of the Lord. If, in response to this letter, the Thessalonians—or a later community reading 1 Thessalonians—took the warning seriously and kept watch, they may have been overzealous in identifying certain signs that the day of the Lord had arrived, such as war, famine, or natural disasters.[51] However, it is impossible to know precisely how this rumour originated—even the author suggests he does not know how it came to them (2:2 "whether through spirit, or word, or a letter, as if by us"). Nevertheless, if the community believed the day of the Lord had arrived while the promised *parousia* had not, they would have understandably been frightened, for there was then no salvation in sight for them. In response to this, the author urges them not to be shaken from their hope in the *parousia* and reminds them of certain key events that must first happen before the day of the Lord occurs. Thus, in both 1 and 2 Thessalonians the main issues revolve around the *parousia* and its delay or nonarrival.

In each of these areas of examination, a compatibility between the two accounts has been demonstrated—that is, both accounts can be held to be true at the same time and they do not contradict each other. First and 2 Thessalonians—while containing different emphases and imagery—describe the eschatological event in ways that are consistent with each other. Both emphasise a clear distinction between those inside the believing community

[51] As suggested in Mark 13//Matthew 24//Luke 21. The possible connections between 1 and 2 Thessalonians and Mark 13par will be evaluated in the following chapter.

and those outside. For the first group, the day of the Lord brings the return of Jesus, who will gather them to himself and be with them forever. For the second group, the day of the Lord means suffering destruction through God's wrath. We should not expect the accounts to be identical, for the author(s)—whether both letters are by Paul or not—are responding to particular needs within their audience(s) that are different between the two letters.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this chapter has been a detailed comparison of the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, based on the eschatological passages examined in the previous two chapters. Though there are notable differences in the two accounts, I have determined that 1 and 2 Thessalonians are compatible in all the eschatological aspects highlighted in the examination above. In particular, we need to do away with the argument that the timings of the events in the two letters are incompatible. Rather, the two accounts both urge believers to be on guard while highlighting how unexpectedly the day of the Lord will arrive for nonbelievers.

There are, of course, certain differences between the two letters—this is, indeed, a prerequisite of any valid comparison. However, these are better attributed to a difference in situation than to a fundamental difference in theological outlook between the two. Yet, as discussed in the introduction to this chapter, (in)compatibility cannot be determinative for authorship. Even though the two letters are compatible this gives us no proof that Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians, for a later author could have written 2 Thessalonians in an attempt to further support the apostle's theology as received in 1 Thessalonians, or both letters

could be the attempt of pseudonymous authors to further their own agenda in the apostle's authoritative name. In the following chapter, I will present a theory for why these particular similarities and differences have been observed in these two accounts. As I will argue, the reason 1 Thessalonians emphasises the suddenness of the day of the Lord and 2 Thessalonians emphasises certain events that must happen before the day of the Lord is because these two letters are based on an early Christian tradition that held the concepts of suddenness and certain signs in tension.

CHAPTER 4: A SHARED ESCHATOLOGICAL TRADITION

In the previous chapter, I observed that while the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians are compatible there are notable differences between them, with 1 Thessalonians focusing on the suddenness of the day of the Lord and 2 Thessalonians highlighting necessary events that must first occur before that day. Throughout the analysis of these two letters we have seen numerous parallels between the Thessalonian correspondence and the Synoptic Gospels—particularly the eschatological discourse found in Mark 13, Matthew 24, and Luke 21. These parallels suggest a possible solution to the problem of the relationship of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, for they indicate a similar phenomenon in other sectors of early Christianity: suddenness and signs are held together in the same discourse. Since my goal in this thesis is to explain the eschatologies of these two letters and their relationship to each other, to give an answer to this question we now need to look at these other texts.

In this chapter, I will first outline these parallels and demonstrate that these texts all share a similar pattern of emphasising that the day of the Lord will come unexpectedly alongside the need to keep watch for certain signs and events that will precede that day. To better understand the relationship between these texts, I will then explore the history of this eschatological tradition, discussing both the Synoptic problem and the various possible relationships with the Thessalonian correspondence. I conclude that there is a shared eschatological discourse behind both the Synoptic eschatological discourse and 1 and 2 Thessalonians, which can explain the observed differences between the two letters. This shared tradition has combined sayings of Jesus on keeping watch with a

re-interpretation of Daniel 7-12, both of which have been applied to the still-future return of Jesus.

THE THESSALONIAN CORRESPONDENCE AND THE SYNOPTIC ESCHATOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

Mark 13, Matthew 24, and Luke 21 contain a discourse that is commonly referred to as the eschatological discourse or Synoptic apocalypse, which has significant parallels with the eschatological material in 1 and 2 Thessalonians. While N. T. Wright has argued that the discourse in Mark 13, Matthew 24, and Luke 21 refers solely to Jesus's vindication through the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE,[1] the great majority of scholars understand it as pointing forward to Jesus's future *parousia*.[2] In Mark 13:24, the author writes that the Son of Man will come "in those days, after that suffering." The author does not specify exactly how long this event will occur after the temple's desecration, but rather that it is a sign that the End is on its way. On the other hand, in Matt 24:29, the coming of the Son of Man is said to occur "immediately after the suffering of those days." However, the disciples ask two questions in Matt 24:3: "Tell us, when will this [the destruction of the

[1] N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God 2 (London: SPCK, 1996), 339-366.

[2] On Mark 13: Morna D. Hooker, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Mark*, BNTC (London: Black, 1991), 297-324; Edward Adams, "The Coming of the Son of Man in Mark's Gospel," *TynBul* 56 (2005): 39-61; Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 591-619; On Matthew 24: Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21-28: A Commentary*, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005), 182; Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 559-593; W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, (T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1997), 3:329-331. On Luke 21: John Nolland, *Luke 18:34-24:53*, WBC 35C (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 987, 1005-1007; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Volume 2: 9:51-24:53*, BECNT 3B (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 1650-1697; François Bovon, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas: Lk 19,28-24,53*, EKKNT 3/4 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2009), 161-209.

temple] be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" This indicates that there are two different events spoken of in this passage. In Luke 21, the author presents the destruction of Jerusalem as an act of judgment upon the Jews. The coming of the Son of Man is then presented as a wider judgment, for "it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth" (21:35). Thus, in Mark, Matthew, and Luke the desecration of the temple (or destruction of Jerusalem in Luke) is not seen as the same event as the Son of Man's coming. Instead, this arrival of the Son of Man brings judgment to all the nations just as the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple brought judgment upon the nation of Israel. Ultimately, even if this discourse is focused solely on the desecration of the temple, the authors clearly understand this as an eschatological event, equating it with one of the events of "the end." Though from our position 2,000 years later we see that a literal "end" to history or the world did not follow the destruction of the temple, it is of course possible the authors did understand the temple's destruction as one of the events that led up to Christ's return, that heralded the nearness of that day; thus, this is appropriately understood as an eschatological discourse. In the previous two chapters, parallels between the Synoptic eschatological discourse and the Thessalonian letters were observed; these possible parallels will now be outlined in detail, and in the following sections I will examine these texts' relationship with each other.

In 2 Thess 2, the author urges his audience to not be alarmed, using the verb θροέω.[3] This same verb occurs in both Mark 13:7 (μὴ θροεῖσθε; "do not be alarmed") and Matt 24:6

[3] θροέω only occurs in the New Testament in Mark 13, Matt 24, and 2 Thess 2. There is a textual variant in Luke 24:37 where θροηθέντες replaces πτοηθέντες in B and 𝔓75.

(ὁρᾶτε μὴ θροεῖσθε; "see that you are not alarmed"), where Jesus urges his listeners not to be alarmed by rumours of wars. The same idea is communicated by Luke 21:9's πτοέομαι, "be terrified." The problem in 2 Thessalonians, as mentioned, was that there was a rumour going around that the day of the Lord had already arrived because of a local disaster, such as an earthquake or famine, which they had interpreted to mean God's wrath had come. In Mark 13, Matt 24, and Luke 21, there are likewise said to be troubling events such as wars and persecution that might cause people to believe "the end" is here. However, each of these writers urges their audience not to be alarmed in response to these rumours, for the end has not yet come. Instead, they point to further events that must still happen before the end arrives.

The language of "abomination of desolation" (τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως) in Mark and Matthew is taken from Daniel—as Matt 24:15 explicitly states (τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Δανιὴλ τοῦ προφήτου; "spoken of by Daniel the prophet"). Daniel 7-12, as shown in chapter 2, stands behind the description of the man of lawlessness in 2 Thess 2:3-4. He proclaims himself to be God and exalts himself above all, just as the king in Dan 11:36 does. This lawless one sets himself up in the temple, just as the abomination of desolation is set up in the temple:

2 Thess 2:4	**Mark 13:14**	**Matt 24:15**
ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσαι ἀποδεικνύντα ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ἐστὶν θεός. [the man of lawlessness] takes his seat in the temple of God displaying himself as being God	Ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως ἑστηκότα ὅπου οὐ δεῖ, ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοείτω But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be	Ὅταν οὖν ἴδητε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Δανιὴλ τοῦ προφήτου ἑστὸς ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel standing in the holy place

In the Synoptic eschatological discourse, it is only after the desolation of the temple and the appearance of false messiah figures who deceive people through false signs and omens that Jesus will come for his people. Mark and Matthew both describe false prophets who will come and deceive many through signs and omens; Luke omits this material. Likewise, in 2 Thess 2 the man of lawlessness opposes God and deceives many through false signs and wonders, until the restrainer is removed and he is revealed. Only at this point does Jesus come, destroying this figure and gathering his own people to himself. One difference is that the Synoptics envision multiple false figures who deceive, while in 2 Thess 2 the man of lawlessness is a solitary figure. Additionally, 2 Thess 2:9-12 is clear that it is only nonbelievers who are deceived by the lawless one: "The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception *for those who are perishing*, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore, God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned *who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness*." On the other hand, the Synoptics leave open the possibility that even believers will fall away in the face of the harsh persecution and false signs and wonders. For example, Mark 13:22 states: "False christs and false prophets will appear and produce signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, the elect." Matthew repeats this same warning in 24:24, but in 24:12 he even more strongly writes, "And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold."

Each of these texts contains the image of the Lord Jesus coming from heaven. Mark, Matthew, and Luke all seem to be intentionally quoting Dan 7:13 when they write of the

"Son of Man coming in the clouds" with power and glory. Each of the gospel writers, while conveying the same imagery, use slightly different wording in their adaptation of this verse:

OG Dan 7:13	**TH Dan 7:13**
ἰδοὺ ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ Behold on the clouds of heaven	ἰδοὺ μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ Behold with the clouds of heaven
ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἤρχετο one like a son of man was coming	ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενος ἦν was one like a son of man coming

Mark 13:26	**Matt 24:30**	**Luke 21:27**
καὶ τότε ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου and then they will see the son of man	καὶ ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου and they will see the son of man	καὶ τότε ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου and then they will see the son of man
ἐρχόμενον ἐν νεφέλαις coming in clouds	ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ coming on the clouds of heaven	ἐρχόμενον ἐν νεφέλῃ coming in a cloud
μετὰ δυνάμεως πολλῆς καὶ δόξης with great might and glory	μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆ with might and great glory	μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς with might and great glory

Compared to Mark and Luke, Matthew's version closely matches the wording of OG Dan 7:13, which would suggest his own redactional activity. Mark and Matthew both include a gathering of the elect as part of this event, but Luke omits this aspect. In Mark 13, Jesus is specifically said to do the gathering, while in Matt 24 it is the angels who gather the people. However, in this case Jesus is ultimately responsible for the gathering, even if he does so through the agency of his angels.

First and 2 Thessalonians both contain similar imagery for Jesus's coming and gathering of his people. In 1 Thess 4, Jesus does similarly descend, but he is not said to be

transported by the clouds. Rather, it is the believers who are caught up in clouds that convey them to meet Jesus. In 2 Thess 1:7, in similar phrasing to the Synoptics, Jesus is accompanied by the angels of his might (μετ' ἀγγέλων δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ). Second Thessalonians 2:1 connects the gathering of believers with Jesus's *parousia*. The word for gathering here is ἐπισυναγωγή; the verbal form of this word is used in Mark 13:27 and Matt 24:31 for the son of man's eschatological gathering of his people. First Thessalonians 4:17 uses ἁρπάζω, but the idea is arguably similar. In all of these accounts the same thing happens: when Jesus comes, he gathers his people.

The well-known thief imagery appears in both 1 Thess 5 and Matt 24. In 1 Thess 5:2, the author writes that the "day of the Lord" will come like a thief in the night, bringing sudden destruction to those outside the believing community. It is because of the unknown timing of the day of the Lord that the author urges the Thessalonians to always remain watchful, living like sons of the light rather than like nonbelievers. Matthew 24:42-44 contains the same thief imagery, and this material also appears in Luke 12:39-40, though in both of the Synoptic passages it is a parable rather than a metaphor, as in 1 Thess 5:2:

1 Thess 5:2	**Matt 24:43-44**	**Luke 12:39-40**[4]
αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἴδατε ὅτι ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς <u>κλέπτης</u> ἐν νυκτὶ οὕτως <u>ἔρχεται</u>.	Ἐκεῖνο δὲ γινώσκετε ὅτι εἰ ᾔδει ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης ποίᾳ φυλακῇ ὁ <u>κλέπτης</u> <u>ἔρχεται</u>, ἐγρηγόρησεν ἂν καὶ οὐκ ἂν εἴασεν διορυχθῆναι τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ.	τοῦτο δὲ γινώσκετε ὅτι εἰ ᾔδει ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης ποίᾳ ὥρᾳ ὁ <u>κλέπτης</u> <u>ἔρχεται</u>, οὐκ ἂν ἀφῆκεν διορυχθῆναι τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ.
For you know accurately that the day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night.	But know this: if the owner of the house had known in what watch of the night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would	But know this: if the owner of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming,

[4] The relationship of Matt 24 and Luke 12 will be discussed below.

	not have let his house be broken into. διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὑμεῖς γίνεσθε ἕτοιμοι, ὅτι ᾗ οὐ δοκεῖτε ὥρᾳ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεται. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.	he would not have let his house be broken into. καὶ ὑμεῖς γίνεσθε ἕτοιμοι, ὅτι ᾗ ὥρᾳ οὐ δοκεῖτε ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεται. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

In this passage, Matthew uses the same verb (γρηγορέω) as Paul in 1 Thess 5:6 to speak of the need to keep watch and be prepared for the day of the Lord. In both these texts, the need for watchfulness is justified by the unknown timing of the Lord's coming—since it will come like a thief in the night, one must stay awake and keep watch. While Mark 13 lacks the thief imagery, it does focus on the unexpected nature of the Lord's return and uses vocabulary similar to 1 Thessalonians, though in different ways:

1 Thess 5:5-7	**Mark 13:35-37**	**Matt 24:42**
ἄρα οὖν μὴ καθεύδωμεν ὡς οἱ λοιποὶ ἀλλὰ γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν. Οἱ γὰρ καθεύδοντες νυκτὸς καθεύδουσιν καὶ οἱ μεθυσκόμενοι νυκτὸς μεθύουσιν· Therefore let us not sleep like the rest but let us keep watch and be sober. For those who sleep sleep at night and those who get drunk get drunk at night.	γρηγορεῖτε οὖν· οὐκ οἴδατε γὰρ πότε ὁ κύριος τῆς οἰκίας ἔρχεται, ἢ ὀψὲ ἢ μεσονύκτιον ἢ ἀλεκτοροφωνίας ἢ πρωΐ, μὴ ἐλθὼν ἐξαίφνης εὕρῃ ὑμᾶς καθεύδοντας. ὃ δὲ ὑμῖν λέγω πᾶσιν λέγω, γρηγορεῖτε. Therefore keep watch. For you do not know when the master of the house is coming, in the evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or at dawn, lest he find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And I what I say to you I say to all: keep watch.	Γρηγορεῖτε οὖν, ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε ποίᾳ ἡμέρᾳ ὁ κύριος ὑμῶν ἔρχεται Therefore keep watch, because you do not know what day your Lord is coming.

Similar ideas are also present in Luke 21:34-36, and though his vocabulary is different from Matthew and Mark there are some striking parallels with 1 Thessalonians:

1 Thess 5:3	**Luke 21:34-36**
ὅταν λέγωσιν· εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια, When they say, "peace and security,"	Προσέχετε δὲ ἑαυτοῖς μήποτε βαρηθῶσιν ὑμῶν αἱ καρδίαι ἐν κραιπάλῃ καὶ μέθῃ Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness
τότε αἰφνίδιος αὐτοῖς ἐφίσταται ὄλεθρος ὥσπερ ἡ ὠδὶν τῇ ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσῃ, then sudden destruction will come upon them just as labour pains on a pregnant woman	καὶ μερίμναις βιωτικαῖς καὶ ἐπιστῇ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς αἰφνίδιος ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνη ὡς παγίς· and the worries of this life, and that day does not come upon you unexpectedly, like a trap. ἐπεισελεύσεται γὰρ ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς καθημένους ἐπὶ πρόσωπον πάσης τῆς γῆς. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth.
καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐκφύγωσιν. and they will by no means escape	ἀγρυπνεῖτε δὲ ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ δεόμενοι ἵνα κατισχύσητε ἐκφυγεῖν ταῦτα πάντα τὰ μέλλοντα γίνεσθαι καὶ σταθῆναι ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.

As in 1 Thess 5:7, Luke 21:34 also uses drunkenness as an example of behaviour that should not be practiced by those expecting the day of the Lord. He additionally describes the arrival of the day of the Lord as "sudden" (αἰφνίδιος). Though he uses a different verb (ἀγρυπνέω), Luke still focuses on the need to be alert and prepared for the day of the Lord.

In Mark 13, Matt 24 and Luke 21 a call to watchfulness follows a section on the Son of Man coming with clouds. The same pattern is present in 1 Thessalonians—chapter 4 is

concerned with the coming of the Lord and chapter 5 with this call to watchfulness. Interestingly, the Synoptic writers combine this focus on signs to watch out for with an emphasis on the suddenness of the event. As Hooker notes,

> Mark's version of the parable neatly holds together the twin emphases of the eschatological tension: the End will come suddenly (when one least expects it), so one must be ready now; nevertheless, the time of its coming is unknown, so one must be prepared for a long wait. But, sooner or later, the End will come. Mark's readers must not be misled by premature announcements of Jesus's glorious return, but neither must they cease to expect him.[5]

If this is the case, this would be further support that the timings in 1 and 2 Thessalonians are compatible. Regardless, it is indeed true that in each of the Synoptic accounts the same author can highlight both the suddenness of the eschatological events along with a call to be prepared.[6]

Yet, there is debate about the extent of these parallels. For example, concerning 1 Thessalonians, Christopher Tuckett regards only 5:2 as a direct connection with the tradition that appears in the Synoptics.[7] The rest of the parallels, he argues, are simply instances of common influence from the Jewish scriptures. All scholars are agreed, however, that the thief material is significant enough to reflect shared tradition between

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[5] Hooker, *Mark*, 323.

[6] Cf. Witherington, *Thessalonians*, 207-208: "Some have found it difficult to reconcile the language of possible imminence in 1 Thessalonians with the discussion of necessary preliminary events, particularly the apostasy and the appearance of the man of lawlessness, in 2 Thessalonians. These discussions have almost never taken into consideration rhetorical factors, nor have they adequately dealt with the juxtaposition in early Jewish apocalyptic of the language of imminence with the discussion of preliminary eschatological events. Indeed, we see this in the NT—for instance in Mark 13. What is usually never spelled out in such discussion, Jewish or Jewish Christian, is the amount of time between the preliminary events and the parousia or end. Nor is it spelled out in 2 Thessalonians."

[7] C. M. Tuckett, "Synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians?" in *Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. Collins, 160-182, 182.

1 Thessalonians, Matthew, and Luke. Yet, if the thief material is evidence of either a connection or shared tradition between 1 Thessalonians and the Synoptic Gospels, then parallels that on their own would not be convincing gain greater importance. Since the author of 1 Thessalonians knew of one eschatological saying that appears in the Synoptics, it is possible that he also knew of others related to it, some of which may have also ended up in the Synoptics. Though there is not as striking a parallel between 2 Thessalonians and the Synoptic eschatological discourse, they contain many similar elements and both are clearly influenced by Dan 7-12. However, the parallels between each of the Synoptic accounts and 1 and 2 Thessalonians are not all the same:

1 & 2 Thess	**Mark 13**	**Matthew 24**	**Luke 21**
1 Thess 4:15; 2 Thess 2:1, 8: *parousia*		24:3, 27, 37, 39: *parousia*	
1 Thess 4:16-17: command archangel's call God's trumpet cloud (transports believers)	13:26-27: send out angels clouds (transport son of man)	24:30-31: send out angels trumpet call clouds (transport son of man)	21:27: cloud (transport son of man)
1 Thess 4:16-17 catching up believers ἁρπαγησόμεθα 2 Thess 2:1: gathering ἐπισυναγωγῆς	13:27 gather the elect ἐπισυνάξει	24:31 gather the elect ἐπισυνάξουσιν	
1 Thess 4:17: meeting the Lord in the air εἰς ἀπάντησιν		[25:1, 6: meet the bridegroom εἰς ἀπάντησιν]	
1 Thess 5:2: you know accurately the day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night		24:42-44: you do not know what day your Lord comes…	[12:39-40: thief and unexpected timing what hour the thief comes

κλέπτης ἐν νυκτὶ οὕτως ἔρχεται		οὐκ οἴδατε ποίᾳ ἡμέρᾳ ὁ κύριος ὑμῶν ἔρχεται what watch of the night the thief comes ὁ κλέπτης ἔρχεται	ὁ κλέπτης ἔρχεται the son of man comes at an hour you do not expect ᾗ ὥρᾳ οὐ δοκεῖτε ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεται]
1 Thess 5:3: will come upon them αὐτοῖς ἐφίσταται sudden…destruction αἰφνίδιος no escape ἐκφύγωσιν			21:34-36: that day come upon you ἐπιστῇ ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς suddenly αἰφνίδιος pray you may escape ἐκφυγεῖν
1 Thess 5:6: keep alert/awake γρηγορῶμεν warning against sleeping καθεύδωμεν	13:35-37: keep alert/awake γρηγορεῖτε warning against sleeping καθεύδοντας	24:42-44: keep alert/awake γρηγορεῖτε	21:36: be alert ἀγρυπνεῖτε
2 Thess 2:2: do not be alarmed θροεῖσθαι	13:7: do not be alarmed θροεῖσθε	24:6: see that you are not alarmed θροεῖσθε	21:7-9: do not be terrified πτοηθῆτε
2 Thess 2:3-4, 9: man of lawlessness; lawless one sits in the temple of God	13:14: abomination of desolation standing where it ought not to be	24:15: abomination of desolation stands in the holy place	
2 Thess 2:3-4: rebellion; man of lawlessness (*ἀνομίας*)		24:12: increase of lawlessness (*ἀνομίαν*)	
2 Thess 2:9-10: false signs and wonders, wicked deception	13:22 False christs and prophets give signs and wonders, to lead astray	24:24: false christs and prophets give great signs and wonders, to deceive	

As made clear in the table above, Matthew and Mark have a number of parallels with 1 and 2 Thessalonians that do not appear in Luke 21. One unique parallel that Mark shares with 1 Thessalonians is the verb καθεύδω in the exhortation to watchfulness. While Mark uses it literally, there is a secondary metaphorical meaning; 1 Thessalonians uses καθεύδω in the same way. Neither Matthew nor Luke use καθεύδω in their accounts. However, the rest of Mark's parallels are also shared with Matthew. The image of the trumpet in connection with the *parousia* only appears in Matt 24. Furthermore, only Matthew uses *parousia* in this discourse (24:3). Immediately before chapter 24, Matt 23:34-39 contains the indictment against Jerusalem and its inhabitants as killers of the prophets, which is close in thought to the statement in 1 Thess 2:14-16 that Jews killed Jesus, just as they had the prophets. In chapter 25, Matthew's eschatological material continues with depictions of the last judgment and other parables about the nature of the kingdom of God. In Matt 25:6 the phrase εἰς ἀπάντησιν ("to a meeting") occurs, which is used in 1 Thess 4:17 to describe the meeting of the believers who are caught up to be with their Lord. The only other place this phrase occurs in the New Testament is in Acts 28:15, where it is simply used to indicate a meeting between people, not an eschatological event. Matthew 25:13 follows this parable with nearly the same warning he issued in 24:42: Γρηγορεῖτε οὖν, ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε τὴν ἡμέραν οὐδὲ τὴν ὥραν ("Therefore keep watch, for you do not know the day nor the hour"), linking the two. Luke's account has the fewest direct parallels with 1 and 2 Thessalonians. He omits some material, such as the gathering of the elect and the desolating figure in the temple, and he uses different vocabulary, such as προσέχω and ἀγρυπνέω instead of γρηγορέω in the exhortations to keep watch. However, in 21:34-36 he uses the same language as in

1 Thessalonians 5—μέθη, αἰφνίδιος, ἐκφεύγω. This material does not appear in Mark or Matthew. Thus, the relationships between the Thessalonian correspondence and each of the Synoptic accounts seem to be different. At this point it is necessary to turn to consider the tradition history of these parallels and the nature of the relationship between 1 and 2 Thessalonians and the Synoptic eschatological discourse.

TRADITION HISTORY

The Synoptic eschatological discourse clearly contains shared traditions between Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Additionally, significant parallels with this material are also found in 1 and 2 Thessalonians. The question is: how are each of these accounts related? In answering this question, a variety of factors must be investigated, including the Synoptic problem as well as the relationship of the Synoptics to Paul.

The Synoptic Problem

In any discussion of tradition history in the Synoptics, the Synoptic problem comes to the forefront. The Two Document Hypothesis (TDH)[8] was dominant throughout the twentieth century—and, indeed, remains the majority view—but it has been increasingly challenged

[8] Alternatively referred to as the Two (i.e. Mark, Q) or Four Source (i.e. Mark, Q, M, L) Hypothesis. Each of these terms appears in the literature; however, at the 2008 Lincoln College Conference in Oxford on the Synoptic problem "it was agreed that the label for each of the three major hypotheses should be that preferred by the majority of advocates of the hypothesis concerned. In this case it was agreed to use the term 'Two Document Hypothesis,'" Christopher Tuckett, "The Current State of the Synoptic Problem," in *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem. Oxford Conference, April 2008. Essays in Honour of Christopher M. Tuckett*, ed. P. Foster et al., BETL 239 (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 9-50, 9.

in recent years.[9] One alternative offered to the TDH is the Two Gospel Hypothesis (TGH), which posits that Mark was written after Matthew and Luke, using both gospels in the creation of his own text.[10] This theory also suggests that Matthew was written before Luke. Many in the early church seemed to prefer the order Matthew-Mark-Luke, though it is not always clear if this was on the basis of honour or chronology.[11] In either case, Matthew was given priority as the first gospel by the early church. Griesbach expanded this proposal in the late eighteenth century; its modern iteration was introduced by William Farmer.[12] The key difference between this theory and others is its proposal of Matthean priority. Yet, Markan priority remains the best explanation for the relationship of the gospels.[13] Matthew and Luke both include passages that have the temple's desolation as a central event, such as Matt 23:37-39 and Luke 13:34-35, which would suggest they both knew about the events of 70 CE, whereas Mark contains no references to such an event. Furthermore, it would be odd for Mark, if writing after Luke, to eliminate Luke's blatant references to the destruction of Jerusalem in Luke 21:20-24. There is also the question of why Mark would have

[9] Mark Goodacre has been one of the most vocal opponents of the Two Document Hypothesis. See, for example, *The Case Against Q: Studies in Markan Priority and the Synoptic Problem* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002); *The Synoptic Problem: A Way Through the Maze*, BibSem 80 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002). See also Francis Watson, *Gospel Writing: A Canonical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013).

[10] This is the revivified Griesbach Hypothesis. Key proponents of this theory are represented in David Barrett Peabody, Allan J. McNicol, Lamar Cope, ed., *One Gospel from Two: Mark's Use of Matthew and Luke: A Demonstration by the Research Team of the International Institute for Renewal of Gospel Studies* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002).

[11] Augustine, at least, understood the order chronologically, as seen in *Harmony of the Gospels*, 1.2.3.

[12] William R. Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis* (Dillsboro, NC: Western North Carolina Press, 1976).

[13] For more extensive arguments than can be produced in this brief section, see: Goodacre, *Case Against Q*, 19-45; Peter M. Head, *Christology and the Synoptic Problem: An Argument for Markan Priority*, SNTSMS 94 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

eliminated such a large amount of material if he was copying from Matthew and Luke. It is more likely that Mark produced his gospel first, writing an account that lacked both birth and resurrection narratives. Matthew and Luke were then influenced by Mark's initial work and sought to add more detail to the story of Jesus, including traditional material about Jesus's early life and his resurrection.

When one accepts Markan priority, only three options remain: Matthew used Luke, Luke used Matthew, Matthew and Luke are independent of each other. While scholars argue about whether or not Luke knew Matthew, most are agreed that Matthew certainly did not know Luke. A notable exception to this is Alan Garrow, who argues for a "Matthew Conflator Hypothesis" in which Matthew knew and used Luke along with Mark and "Q," where "Q" is anything Matthew and Luke share that is not also in Mark; for Garrow, the Didache is an extant example of this shared material.[14] One of Garrow's key arguments is the variation in verbatim agreement between Matthew and Luke. In other words, in the double tradition sometimes Matthew and Luke have high word-for-word agreement and other times they have low agreement. His model seeks to provide a good explanation for this variation by arguing that Matthew is directly copying from Luke "without distraction" in high verbatim passages while in low verbatim passages Matthew is "distracted" by the Didache, which he conflates with Luke.[15] However, there are several high verbatim passages that share parallels with Mark, such as the Beelzebub controversy in

[14] Alan Garrow, "Streeter's 'Other' Synoptic Solution: The Matthew Conflator Hypothesis," *NTS* 62 (2016): 207-226; idem., "An Extant Instance of 'Q,'" *NTS* 62 (2016): 398-417.
[15] Garrow, "Streeter's 'Other' Synoptic Solution," 214.

Matt 12:22-30//Luke 11:14-23, which is paralleled in Mark 3:19b-30.[16] On Garrow's model, this should not be the case—there should be a lower verbatim rate here. Following Garrow's model, Matthew would be "distracted" by Mark's account and so would conflate Mark and Luke, leading to fewer word-for-word agreements. The Matthew Conflator Hypothesis does not have a consistent explanation for Matthew's authorial behaviour and so fails to provide a satisfying solution for the Synoptic problem.[17]

While it is clear that Matthew did not use Luke, the influence of Matthew on Luke is still heavily debated. The TDH argues that Matthew and Luke independently used Mark and the double tradition material they share can be attributed to an early document designated as Q. An argument regularly launched for the independence of Matthew and Luke is that of "alternating primitivity." This is encapsulated in Streeter's comment: "Sometimes it is Matthew, sometimes it is Luke, who gives a saying in what is clearly the more original form. This is explicable if both are drawing from the same source, each making slight modifications of his own; it is not so if either is dependent on the other."[18] Yet, as has been observed by critics of the TDH, this alternating primitivity does not, in fact,

[16] See also John's messianic preaching Matt 3:12//Luke 3:17; the sign of Jonah Matt 12:38-42//Luke 11:16, 29-32.

[17] Mark Goodacre has critiqued Garrow's argument on his *NT Blog* in two posts: "Garrow's Flaw" (http://ntweblog.blogspot.com/2017/12/garrows-flaw.html) from 12 December 2017 and "Further Response to Alan Garrow" (http://ntweblog.blogspot.com/2017/12/further-response-to-alan-garrow.html) on 13 December 2017.

[18] Burnett Hillman Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins. Treating of the Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship, & Dates* (London: Macmillan, 1924), 183. This same objection is repeated by David R. Catchpole, *The Quest for Q* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 6 and C. M. Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity: Studies on Q* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 10, among others.

rule out dependence.[19] Luke, even if he knew Matthew, would also have had access to other traditions beyond what Matthew and Mark included, and his use of these sources could account for the more primitive aspects of his gospel. Luke may have preferred a more primitive account to what he found in Matthew. Another argument is that of order, for after the baptism and temptation accounts, Luke does not follow the same order of Matthew in any of the material they share. This is significant for in Luke's use of Mark he usually follows the order closely. It is unlikely that Luke would use such different redactional methods on two similar sources.

The Minor Agreements (MAs)—areas of the triple tradition where Luke changes, adds, or omits a word or small phrase from Mark and matches Matthew—have been seen as the biggest weakness of the TDH and the strongest support for the Farrer theory, which argues that Matthew used Mark and Luke used both Mark and Matthew.[20] This theory has been particularly championed by Mark Goodacre, who maintains Markan priority while dispensing with Q. Instead, he argues, both Luke's differences and similarities with Matthew are better explained as his editing of and additions to Matthew. The problem of the MAs for the TDH is that if Matthew and Luke both used Mark independently, we would not expect to see the number of MAs that we do.[21] Yet, many of the MAs can be understood

[19] Critics have also noted the subjective nature of deciding what counts as "primitive." See Garrow, "Streeter's 'Other' Synoptic Solution," 208n4; Goodacre, *Case Against Q*, 62.
[20] By Tuckett's own admission, *Q and the History*, 28. See Goodacre, *Case Against Q*, 168-169.
[21] Though, the actual number is highly debated as there is no agreed upon method for determining what precisely counts as an MA. M. D. Goulder argues there are "more than 750 minor agreements" ("On Putting Q to the Test," *NTS* 24 [1978]: 218-234, 218); Richard B. Vinson, *The Significance of the Minor Agreements as An Argument Against the Two-Document Hypothesis* (PhD diss., Duke University, 1984), provides a number of 2,354 (420n5). However, M. Eugene Boring, "The 'Minor Agreements' and Their Bearing on the Synoptic Problem," in *New Studies in*

as common sense changes to Mark's Greek (e.g. replacing Mark's repetitive και with other conjunctions) or other insignificant changes. As Tuckett argues, "The fact that the MAs are so minor makes it hard to believe that Luke has been both influenced positively by Matthew's text in such (substantively) trivial ways, but also totally uninfluenced by any of Matthew's substantive additions to Mark."[22] There are, however, several significant MAs that cannot easily be explained as independent changes. The most striking occurs in Matt 26:67-68//Luke 22:64//Mark 14:65 where Matthew and Luke both insert the same five words in the exact same place in the narrative. One of the words added is παίω, and this is its only occurrence in both Matthew and Luke, which would suggest literary dependence between the two.[23] One solution offered by advocates of the TDH is that pre-synoptic oral and written traditions would have still been available to Matthew and Luke, even after they were textualised in documents like Mark and Q. Thus, some MAs could have occurred when Matthew and Luke used the wording of one of these sources rather than Mark's account. Orality, however, cannot adequately explain the more significant MAs. In relation to the above referenced passage, Crossan argues, "This presumes that oral versions of an event (if such existed) were so syntactically fixed that they could override the syntactically fixed written versions. It presumes, in other words, that those oral versions were so verbally precise that they could add a five-word verbatim sequence at one point in a scribally copied

the Synoptic Problem, ed. Foster et al., 227-251, argues, "It is no longer a meaningful question to ask how many MAs there 'really' are" (234).

[22] Tuckett, *Q and the History*, 28.

[23] So Goodacre, *Case Against Q*, 158.

version without otherwise disturbing its original context."[24] Despite these offered solutions, the MAs continue to present a problem to the TDH and the Farrer theory has a more satisfying explanation of them.[25]

On the other hand, the "Mark-Q overlaps" cause issues for the Farrer theory. There are certain cases in Matthew and Luke where they seem to show evidence of a similar but not identical version of a story that is also in Mark. Such passages include the temptation narrative (Matt 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13), the Beelzebul controversy (Matt 12:22-32; Mark 3:20-30; Luke 11:14-23), and the parable of the mustard seed (Matt 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19). On the TDH, in these instances Luke decides to follow one of his sources, usually preferring the non-Markan version, and Matthew attempts to conflate his two sources. In these passages, Matthew has parallels with Mark and Luke has parallels to the non-Markan parts of Matthew's account. According to Tuckett, this is one of the strongest arguments for the TDH, and it also causes the most issues for alternative theories.[26] The Farrer theory's explanation for these passages is that Luke had both Mark and Matthew in front of him when composing them.[27] This would require Luke to specifically leave out the Markan material he found in Matthew's account. The Farrer theory argues that Luke generally follows Mark closely, hardly changing his order, while he

[24] John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 54.
[25] However, see Boring, "'Minor Agreements,'" 250: "Advocates of each source theory might do well to rely less on the MAs as decisive evidence for or against their hypothesis. The MAs remain a problem for the 2DH, more so than for other hypotheses. Whether they are considered to be a problem that requires the 2DH to be abandoned or significantly modified depends on the relative strength one attributes to *other* arguments for the 2DH."
[26] Tuckett, *Q and the History*, 34.
[27] Similarly, on the TGH Mark would have had both Matthew and Luke in front of him.

treats Matthew much more flexibly. Yet in these passages, Luke would have to suddenly change his usual procedure and prefer only the parts of Matthew that were not in Mark, which would be inconsistent with his behaviour in the rest of his text. Furthermore, other ancient writers who had more than one account of the same event would either try to conflate the sources or would prefer one over the other.[28] The TDH's explanation of the "Mark-Q overlaps" is consistent with this practice. In summary, there are serious problems with each of the theories attempting to solve the Synoptic problem and the composition history of the gospels is probably more complex than any one theory can explain perfectly, at least given the current state of the debate. As it stands, the most satisfying solution to the Synoptic problem is the TDH. Despite its weaknesses, it best accounts for the complex creation of the Synoptic Gospels and their interrelations.[29]

The Source(s) of the Eschatological Discourse[30]

As was demonstrated at the beginning of this chapter, Mark 13, Matt 24, and Luke 21 have significant parallels with each other and with the Thessalonian correspondence. In

[28] F. Gerald Downing, "Compositional Conventions and the Synoptic Problem," *JBL* 107 (1988): 69-85.

[29] We would be well-advised to take note of Christopher Tuckett's comment: "We are (hopefully) all now much more aware of the provisional nature of any alleged "solutions" to the Synoptic Problem, and aware too that between our (sometimes neat and simple) solutions and historical reality may lie an unbridgeable chasm. The 'dominant' solution to the Synoptic Problem, the 2DH, is no exception to this: and even though I have (unashamedly?!) sought in this paper to argue that the weaknesses of the 2DH are possibly less than those of other competing hypotheses today, I hope that I have shown that this theory too is open to questioning. It would be a brave, even foolhardy, person who claimed absolute certainty for the correctness of his/her viewpoint!" ("Current State of the Synoptic Problem," 49-50).

[30] See David L. Dungan, ed., *Interrelations of the Gospels: A Symposium Led by M.-E. Boismard, W.R. Farmer, F. Neirynck, Jerusalem 1984*, BETL 95 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990) for extensive discussion of the eschatological discourse's composition on the basis of the TDH and the TGH.

attempting to determine the relationship between the eschatological discourses of Mark, Matthew, and Luke, I placed the passages side-by-side and identified the areas of double and triple tradition, along with the material that was unique to each author.[31] Several immediate observations can be made from this analysis. As is the case with many parts of their gospels, Matthew and Luke's eschatological discourses share material copied from Mark. Matthew generally closely follows Mark's wording, while adding in new material afterwards about the thief. Luke shares much less material than Matthew does with Mark but, like Matthew, he follows Mark's order in the material he does include. At the same time, there appears in Matthew material not found in Mark or Luke and in Luke material not found in Matthew or Mark. This pattern is consistent with Matthew and Luke's redactional work in other sections of their gospels. There are several instances of minor agreements in the triple tradition. In Luke 21:6, after the triple tradition phrase λίθος ἐπὶ λίθῳ ὃς οὐ, Luke agrees with Matthew in changing Mark's καταλυθῇ to καταλυθήσεται and omitting the μή. In 21:27 Luke, like Matthew, changes Mark's δυνάμεως πολλῆς καὶ δόξης to δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς. These agreements are too minor to posit a relationship between Matthew and Luke and are best explained as the two evangelists independently changing the style of Mark's Greek. Luke, as in much of his gospel, has some of the same material as Matt 24, but does not include it in the same section as Matthew. For example, in Matt 24:43-51, the material of the faithful and unfaithful servant begins, including the thief imagery. This same material appears in Luke 12:39-46, and much of the wording is

[31] See the Appendix. I include Luke 12 and 17, which contain the double tradition material found in Matt 24.

verbatim. Likewise, the "days of Noah" material in Matt 24:37-39 shows up in Luke 17:26-27. Neither of these blocks of material appears anywhere in Mark, suggesting Matthew and Luke have access to the same material but incorporate it differently into their narratives. These initial observations would support the TDH.

In a variation of the TDH explanation for this passage, David Wenham argues for the existence of a pre-synoptic gospel, which contained an extensive eschatological discourse that was shortened to become the Synoptic eschatological discourse.[32] The pre-synoptic eschatological discourse, as reconstructed by Wenham, consists of: introductory dialogue, opening warning, beginnings of pangs, coming tribulation, desolation of Jerusalem, great tribulation, warning of deceivers, visibility of parousia, signs of parousia, recognising the signs, time of the events, the unexpected day, keep awake at every moment, parables on absent Lord coming at any moment, parables on serving absent Lord responsibly, the disciples' reward, and judgment of the nations.[33] He argues this discourse was part of a pre-synoptic gospel that was known and used independently by each of the Synoptic writers. Furthermore, Wenham suggests this source "may have been an oral or possibly a written source," though the nature of his argument would suggest he views it as a formal, written source. [34] Wenham does not go so far as to claim this gospel

[32] David Wenham, *The Rediscovery of Jesus' Eschatological Discourse*, Gospel Perspectives 4 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984). Cf. idem., *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity*? (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 289-336.
[33] Wenham, *Rediscovery*, 359-364.
[34] Ibid., 367.

goes back to Jesus himself, but he does raise this as a possibility.[35] In this scenario, Matthew and Luke still have knowledge of Mark but also share and adapt the material from this pre-synoptic gospel. To some extent, Wenham's claims are uncontroversial—supporters of the TDH certainly would agree that Matthew and Luke had access to other sources in addition to their use of Mark and Q. Additionally, as Dunn observes, "his discussion overall does strengthen the case for recognizing that even when one Evangelist knew and used another's Gospel he probably had access to other (and often earlier) forms of the same tradition at the same time."[36] However, Wenham's argument for a pre-synoptic gospel leaves questions as to why that text has not been preserved in any other way. Additionally, his reconstruction of an extensive pre-synoptic eschatological discourse limits the Synoptic authors' creativity in the use and ordering of their own sources. It also fails to account adequately for the divergences in Matthew, Mark, and Luke's presentation of the material.

While there is no solid evidence for a pre-synoptic gospel, nor for an eschatological discourse on the scale that Wenham proposes, there are still questions about whether the core material in Mark 13 was originally its own pre-synoptic discourse. It was once popular to understand the source behind Mark 13 as a "little apocalypse" that was supposedly

[35] Ibid., 373. Wenham argues, "if this pre-synoptic tradition was well-known by the early 50s and if the teaching in it was known by Paul and all the evangelists as the authoritative teaching of Jesus, the onus of proof must be on those who deny the teaching to Jesus, not on those who affirm it."
[36] James D. G. Dunn, review of *The Rediscovery of Jesus' Eschatological Discourse*, by David Wenham, *JTS* 38 (1987): 163-166, 165. Cf. Davis and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:327-328, who agree with Wenham that there is pre-Matthean tradition in Mt 24:10-12, 30-31, but who argue Matthew here has access to a small apocalypse like that found in Did. 16.3-6.

written as the Jewish War approached or began,[37] or in the shadow of Caligula's efforts to have a statue of himself installed in the temple.[38] This is suggested because of an apparent disconnect between the question the disciples ask in 13:4 and the extensive discourse with which Jesus replies, without directly answering them until 13:32. Thus, it is suggested, this introduction was created to transition into the pre-Markan discourse. Another piece of evidence adduced for a pre-Markan written source is the aside in 13:14: "let the reader understand."[39] It is argued that this phrase makes no sense coming from Jesus's lips, so it must be a remainder from the written source Mark incorporated into his text. However, this phrase is easily understood as Mark's own literary device that indicates "abomination of desolation" is a cryptic symbol that needs to be interpreted, much as it functioned in Daniel.[40] Mark does not directly mention Daniel, but his use of the language τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως ("abomination of desolation") and the cryptic hint of "let the reader understand" point to an intentional allusion. Specifically, this language appears in Dan 9:27

[37] T. Colani, *Jésus-Christ et les croyances messianiques de son temps*, 2nd rev. and enl. ed. (Strasbourg: Treuttel et Wurtz, 1864), 201-209, first argued for an apocalypse as the source of Mark 13:5-34 that the Synoptic authors mistook for a genuine discourse of Jesus. Colani connects this apocalypse to an oracle Eusebius reports was given to the Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem, just before the siege of Jerusalem, warning them to flee. Egon Brandenburger, *Markus 13 und die Apokalyptik*, FRLANT 134 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 41, argues that the apocalypse was written after the beginning of the Jewish War: "Grundstock ist für Markus eine jedenfalls *nach* Beginn des Jüdischen Krieges entstandene *schriftliche Vorlage*, die freilich vor allem zu Beginn kaum vollständig erhalten sein kann: V. 7f. 14-20. 24-27." See also Brandenburger's outline of tradition and redaction in Mark 13 (166-167).

[38] See Gustav Holscher, "Der Ursprung der Apokalypse Mrk 13," *TBl* 12 (1933): 193-202; Gerd Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992), 136-165. Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), 122, argues that Mark 13 takes over a Jewish apocalypse and turns it into a saying of Jesus, without providing a historical occasion for this original apocalypse.

[39] Colani, *Jésus-Christ*, 206-207.

[40] Collins, *Mark*, 596.

(βδέλυγμα τῶν ἐρημώσεων), 11:31 (OG: βδέλυγμα ἐρημώσεως; TH lacks ἐρημώσεως), and 12:11 (OG: τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως; TH: βδέλυγμα ἐρημώσεως). In Matthew's account, there is an added clarification (as is his redactional tendency) where he mentions that τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως "was spoken of by the prophet Daniel." This is what the reader of Mark is to understand, and Matthew draws out this point to make sure his own readers *do* understand.

Mark 13 shows greater connections with Daniel than just the "abomination of desolation" language. The "son of man coming down on the clouds" in 13:26 is taken from Dan 7:13-14. In Mark 13:19, it is asserted "in those days there will be suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, no, and never will be." This is very similar to Dan 12:1: "There shall be a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence." These allusions are so striking that one may wonder whether Mark 13 is, at its heart, an exposition of Daniel. Lars Hartman in his book, *Prophecy Interpreted*, picks up on this connection with Daniel and suggests "the nucleus of the eschatological discourse consisted of a 'midrash' on [Daniel]."[41] However, he is cautious in this evaluation, stating that "many things must have happened to this 'midrash' before the eschatological discourse took on the form it has now."[42] Hartman first examines other Jewish apocalyptic texts, noting the importance of the Jewish scriptures as a background for each of these texts. Hartman similarly examines Mark 13 and Matt 24 by determining their Jewish background. From this exercise, he argues that Daniel is the most

[41] Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted*, 235. The passages he suggests as the inspiration for this midrash are: Dan 2:31-45, 7:7-27, 8:9-26, 9:24-27, and 11:21-12:4(13).
[42] Ibid., 174.

prominent source for these passages, though many other Jewish scriptural passages—particularly from the prophetic books—play an important role in the discourse as well. While Hartman's understanding of midrash (which he never defines) has been criticised, he does make an important contribution by highlighting the extensive background of Daniel in this discourse.[43] However, some of his connections with Daniel are weaker than others. For example, he links Ἐγώ εἰμι ("I am") in 13:6 with "the horn magnifying itself" in Dan 7:8, 11, 20; 8:10-11; 11:36.[44] This verse—as many others in the passage—is better understood as a general reference to Jewish tradition. Likewise, the rumours of wars mentioned in 13:7 and the earthquakes and famines in 13:8 are common prophetic motifs. In fact, many of the allusions that can be identified in this chapter are set in the context of day of YHWH passages.[45] Thus, many argue for the composite nature of the chapter.[46] It seems that Mark knows an eschatological tradition—or multiple traditions—which combined a variety of prophetic and apocalyptic elements (some of which are possibly also Jesus traditions) when he produced this discourse.[47] As mentioned above, Matthew and Luke, while sharing much of Mark's material in this discourse, also include a significant portion of additional material. At this point, it is necessary to turn to the parallels with

[43] See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, review of *Prophecy Interpreted: The Formation of Some Jewish Apocalyptic Texts and of the Eschatological Discourse Mark 13 Par.*, by Lars Hartman, *Int* 23 (1969): 249-251: "Part of my difficulty is Hartman's loose use of such terms as midrash; I am not sure he knows what a midrash is" (251).
[44] Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted*, 159-161.
[45] E.g. Isa 19:2; Zech 2:15; 14:1-20.
[46] G. R. Beasley-Murray, "Second Thoughts on the Composition of Mark 13," *NTS* 29 (1983): 414-420. Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 596: "Although it is likely that Mark used one or more written sources in composing this chapter, it is unlikely that he used an extensive, coherent written source."
[47] Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 601, suggests it is equally possible this tradition was oral or written, and "it is not possible to reconstruct earlier oral or even written traditions used by the evangelist in this chapter with a reasonable degree of certainty."

1 and 2 Thessalonians, for it is in these additional sections of Matthew and Luke that several unique and significant parallels are found, and thus these two letters play an important role in the tradition history of the Synoptic eschatological discourse.

Paul and the Synoptic Gospels

The parallels identified at the beginning of this chapter between the Thessalonian correspondence and the Synoptic eschatological discourse raise the question of the way in which the accounts are connected. There exist a variety of explanations for the relationship between the Synoptics and 1 and 2 Thessalonians, each of which needs to be considered in detail.

The Influence of 1 and 2 Thessalonians

It is theoretically possible that 1 or 2 Thessalonians, or both, directly influenced the Synoptic Gospels. However, the question of the Synoptic authors' knowledge of Paul remains contentious.[48] This is a complex issue, for none of the gospel writers directly quote or reference any of Paul's letters in their texts, and many of the proposed parallels could easily be attributed to shared Jewish or early Christian traditions. On the other hand, the earliest Christian community was comparatively small, and we might expect the key figures within it to have some familiarity with each other. For example, since Luke and Acts were written by the same person, there is certainly an awareness of and indeed specific

[48] See, for example, the diverse conclusions of the essays in *Paul and the Gospels: Christologies, Conflicts and Convergences*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Joel Willits, LNTS 411 (London: T&T Clark, 2011).

interest in Paul and his ministry, though that does not mean Luke would have known Paul's letters.[49] Mark does display some Pauline features, such as Jesus's attitude towards the Jewish Law (Mark 7:1-23, particularly v19b: "thus he declared all foods clean."). Furthermore, Mark's Jesus is concerned with the Gentile mission. This is apparent in Mark 13 itself, for in 13:10 the author writes that before the end, "the gospel must first be proclaimed to all the nations." However, the presence of Pauline influence in Mark's text continues to be heavily debated.[50] Matthew's gospel has variously been described as either non-Pauline (displays no interest in or interaction with Paul)[51] or actively anti-Pauline.[52] It is clear that Luke was at least aware of Paul as a heroic figure; however, while it is possible Luke knew some of Paul's teachings, the Lukan Paul regularly reflects Lukan theology. The situation is even less clear for Matthew and Mark, but it is at least plausible they were aware

[49] Recently some scholars have begun to reconsider Luke's knowledge of at least some of Paul's letters. Arguing that Luke knew the letters: Andrew Gregory, "*Acts and Christian Beginnings*: A Review Essay," *JSNT* 39 (2016): 97-115, 109; Lars Aejmelaeus, "The Pauline Letter as Source Material in Luke-Acts," in *The Early Reception of Paul*, ed. Kenneth Liljeström, Suomen Eksegeettisen Seuran julkaisuja 99 (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2011), 54-75; Richard I. Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 2006), 51-147; Ryan S. Schnellenberg, "The First Pauline Chronologist? Paul's Itinerary in the Letters and in Acts," *JBL* 134 (2015): 193-213. The majority of scholars continue to argue that Luke did not know the letters: e.g., Steve Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle: The Portrait of Paul in the Miletus Speech and 1 Thessalonians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 212; C. Kavin Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke*, BZNW 139 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 225; F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 3rd rev. and enl. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 52-59.

[50] See the two volumes: Oda Wischmeyer, David C. Sim, and Ian J. Elmer, eds., *Paul and Mark: Comparative Essays. Part I. Two Authors at the Beginnings of Christianity*, BZNW 198 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014) and Eve-Marie Becker, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, and Mogens Müller, eds., *Mark and Paul: Comparative Essays. Part II. For and Against Pauline Influence on Mark*, BZNW 199 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014) for the wide-ranging positions on Paul and Mark's relationship.

[51] See, e.g., Paul Foster, "Paul and Matthew: Two Strands of the Early Jesus Movement with Little Sign of Connection," in *Paul and the Gospels*, ed. Bird and Willits, 86-114.

[52] See, e.g., David C. Sim, "The Reception of Paul and Mark in the Gospel of Matthew" in *Paul and Mark*, ed. Wischmeyer, Sim, and Elmer, 589-616.

of such a well-known figure in earliest Christianity. If they had heard of Paul, they may have even read some of his letters or known certain of his teachings though, it must be said, this is purely speculative. Regardless, it is a useful thought experiment to consider whether or not the Synoptic accounts might reflect the authors' knowledge of one or both of the Thessalonian epistles.

Since Matt 24 and Luke 21 both used Mark 13 in crafting their own discourses, any parallels the two share with both Mark and 1 and 2 Thessalonians would be explained by their dependence on Mark. The most striking similarity between 1 Thessalonians and Mark 13 is the combination of γρηγορέω and καθεύδω at the end of the discourse. This verbal parallel is missing from Matthew (though he does have γρηγορέω) and Luke, who both replace Mark's parable with different, though thematically related, material. While the passages urge watchfulness and contrast it with sleeping, the motives are not precisely the same. In 1 Thess 5, the audience is urged to "keep watch" for the very reason that they already belong to the day and so this is the appropriate behaviour. In Mark 13, on the other hand, the exhortation stems out of fear that the one who should be keeping watch will grow lax—as indeed occurs in the following chapter in the Garden of Gethsemane scene, which employs the same language of καθεύδω and γρηγορέω.[53] The verbal parallels here should be understood as common exhortatory language rather than an instance of literary dependence. Mark 13 also shares vocabulary with 2 Thessalonians: ἐπισυναγωγή in 2:1 (Mark uses the verbal form) and θροέω in 2:2. Ἐπισυναγωγή is common enough in Jewish and

[53] Mark 14:34, 37, 38, 40, 41. Cf. Matt 26:38, 40, 41, 43, 45. Intriguingly, Luke uses both κοιμάω and καθεύδω in his parallel account of Jesus praying on the Mount of Olives—just as the author of 1 Thessalonians had used the two verbs—though for Luke the two both mean literal sleep.

Christian literature that there is no need to posit direct dependence.[54] Θροέω, on the other hand, only occurs in the New Testament in the texts under consideration: Mark 13:7, Matt 24:6, and 2 Thess 2:2.[55] In both Mark 13//Matt 24 and 2 Thess 2, the command is issued in relation to false rumours that the end has come. This does suggest a shared tradition, but it is difficult to establish any clear literary dependence on the basis of one shared word. While not a verbal parallel, it is possible that the author's dependence on Daniel in 2 Thess 2 could have influenced the Synoptic authors' use of "the abomination of desolation" and other aspects of Daniel's text. Yet, without more extensive verbal links than the two noted words, it is difficult to accept this proposition as more likely than simply a shared interest in and re-interpretation of Daniel or the use of a shared tradition that was already full of Daniel references.

Most of Mark 13's parallels with 1 Thessalonians are also found in Matt 24. Thus, the majority of the parallels observed in the passage can be attributed to Matthew's use of Mark's text. However, there are a few unique parallels Matt 24 shares with 1 Thessalonians; the most striking is the thief imagery. This same imagery appears in Luke 12 and so it is best understood as part of the Q material on watchfulness and faithfulness. Thus, this motif does not demonstrate influence from 1 Thessalonians. Rather, 1 Thessalonians, Matthew,

[54] Gen 6:16; 38:29; 2 Chr 5:6; 20:26; 3 Kgdms 18:20; Ezek 40:12; Isa 9:4; 52:12; Jer 12:6; Hab 2:5; Esth 10:3; Sir 16:10; Ps 30:14; 31:13; 105:47; 146:2; Zech 12:3; 14:2; Dan 3:2; 11:34; Mic 4:11; Tob 13:15; 14:7; Bel 1:30; 1 Esd. 5:49, 8:69, 88, 9:5, 18, 55; Jdt 7:23; 1 Macc 3:58; 5:9, 10, 15, 16, 38, 53, 64; 7:12, 10:61, 11:45, 47, 55; 15:12; 2 Macc 1:27; 2:7, 13, 14, 18; 4:39; Matt 23:37 [x2]; Mark 1:33; Luke 12:1; 13:34; 17:37; Heb 10:25.

[55] In Luke 24:37, some manuscripts replace πτοηθέντες with θροηθέντες (others substitute φοβηθέντες): θροηθέντες: 𝔓75, B, 1241; φοβηθέντες: ℵ W. It is only found in the Greek Jewish scriptures in Song 5:4.

and Luke all repeat or allude to a *logia* of Jesus with this image.[56] Interestingly, this means the author of 1 Thessalonians knew of at least one saying attributed to Jesus that also was part of Q, and he incorporated this into his own eschatological teaching. The trumpet in Matt 24:31 is a unique parallel between Matthew and 1 Thess 4, but it is not used in exactly the same way in the two texts. In 1 Thess 4:16 the trumpet announces the Lord's descent; in Matt 24:31 the Son of Man uses the trumpet to send out the angels to gather his people. Furthermore, given the common use of trumpets in theophanic and day of YHWH texts, it is better understood as a shared image from the tradition.[57] Another parallel unique to Matthew is the phrase εἰς ἀπάντησιν in 25:6. This phrase is widespread in the Greek Jewish scriptures and simply indicates a meeting of two people or groups.[58] It is more likely that both Matthew and 1 Thessalonians independently used this phrase than that Matthew copied 1 Thessalonians and inserted it into the parable of the ten virgins, which was its own separate unit. Finally, Matthew is the only one to use *parousia* in his account. It is possible he took this term from 1 Thessalonians. However, it is not a specifically Pauline term as elsewhere in the New Testament it also appears in Jas 5:7-8 and 2 Pet 3:4. Thus, it is just as likely Matthew knew it as an eschatological term and so incorporated it into his own eschatological discourse. Given the evidence, there is no reason to suggest Matthew

[56] Even Tuckett, "Synoptic Tradition," 182, admits that 1 Thess 5:2 repeats a Jesus saying, whereas he argues "the rest of Paul's language can be most adequately explained by Paul's use of *other* traditions and his own ideas."

[57] Exod 19:13, 16, 19; 20:18; Isa 27:13; Joel 2:1, 15; Zech 9:14; Zeph 1:14-18.

[58] Judg 4:18; 11:31, 34; 14:5; 15:14; 19:3; 20:25, 31; 1 Kgdms 4:1; 6:13; 9:14; 13:10; 13:15; 15:12; 25:32; 25:34; 30:21 [x2]; 2 Kgdms 6:20; 19:26; 1 Chr 12:18; 14:8; 19:5; 2 Chr 12:11; 15:2; 19:2; 20:17; 28:9; Jer 28:31 [x2]; 34:3; 48:6; 1 Esd 1:23; Jdt 5:4; Tob 11:16; 1 Macc 12:41; 2 Macc 12:30; 14:30; 15:12; 3 Macc 1:19.

directly copied 1 or 2 Thessalonians. The parallels in his account can be explained either by his copying of Mark or his use of other traditional material such as Q.

The most likely candidate for direct influence from 1 Thessalonians is Luke 21.[59] In general, the parallels between the Thessalonian letters and Luke 21 are weaker than those between Mark and Matthew. For example, Luke completely excludes the material on Jesus's gathering of the elect. Additionally, Luke spreads his eschatological material out, rather than grouping it all together as Matthew does. Thus, the thief parable appears in Luke 12:39-40: "if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he [would have watched and][60] would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour." Luke 21:34-36 does, however, have an intriguing connection with 1 Thess 5. Both describe an eschatological event that will come suddenly using αἰφνίδιος, which only occurs in these two passages in the New Testament. These two passages also contain the verb ἐκφεύγω, which only appears one other time in the New Testament, in Acts 19:16. The use of these two rare words in these passages, both of which deal with escaping the coming judgment, suggests a literary connection between the accounts. Neither Mark 13 nor Matthew 24 contain the material about fleeing. Thus, this material is unique among the Synoptics and it closely matches the logic of the argument in 1 Thess 5:3-8. While the focus is on those who will not escape in

[59] So Lars Aejmelaeus, *Wachen vor dem Ende: Traditionsgeschichtlichen Wurzeln von 1. Thess 5:1-11 und Luk 21:34-36*, Suomen Eksegeettisen Seuran julkaisuja 44 (Helsinki: Kirjapaino Raamattualo, 1985) and Tuckett, "Synoptic Tradition," 175-176.

[60] Many manuscripts (including A and B) have εγρηγορησεν αν και added to this text. This is likely a later addition, which shows interaction with Matthew's thief parable. 𝔓75 and the original hand of **א** do not contain this addition.

1 Thess 5:3, Luke urges his readers to be alert so that they will escape on "that day." For both, the day of the Lord will arrive suddenly and disastrously for those who are unprepared. McNicol suggests Isa 24:17-18 explains the common language used by Luke and 1 Thessalonians.[61] In Isa 24:1-20, the judgment that is coming upon the whole earth is described and in 24:17-18 it is said that those who flee will be caught in a snare [παγίς], which is the word used in Luke 21:35. Hartman argues that behind παγίς is the Hebrew root חבל that can be vocalised differently to mean "birth-pang," which is translated by the Greek ὠδίν, the word for the labour pains in 1 Thess 5:3.[62] Thus, it is argued, Paul and Luke had two different translations of this passage. Yet, Isa 24 uses φεύγω to describe those who flee—why would both Luke and 1 Thessalonians independently modify this to ἐκφεύγω, especially when Mark 13:14 uses φεύγω? In this case, it is more likely that Luke was influenced by 1 Thess 5 than that both 1 Thessalonians and Luke use traditional material. In conclusion, the Synoptic eschatological discourse was not influenced by 1 and 2 Thessalonians, apart from the material in Luke 21:34-36. Thus, an explanation for the rest of the parallels between the accounts must be sought elsewhere.

The Influence of the Synoptics

While Paul's letters do not provide extensive information about Jesus's life or ministry, there are several places in his letters where he shows awareness of Jesus tradition. In

[61] Allan J. McNicol, *Jesus' Directions for the Future: A Source and Redaction-History Study of the Use of the Eschatological Traditions in Paul and in the Synoptic Accounts of Jesus' Last Eschatological Discourse*, New Gospel Studies 9 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), 25-29.
[62] Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted*, 192.

addition to the parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians and the Synoptic Gospels identified above, there are several other possible connections in Paul's letters to material also found in the gospels. For example, in 1 Cor 7 Paul refers to a teaching on marriage and divorce as a command "from the Lord"; this material is similar to Mark 10:1-12 and Matt 19:1-12. Likewise, in 1 Cor 11:23, the teaching about the Last Supper is said to come "from the Lord" and comes close to the material in Luke 22:19-20. Thus, it is clear Paul was aware of early traditions about Jesus's teaching that also ended up in the Synoptics. What is not clear is whether or not either Paul or later pseudonymous authors would have had access to early forms of material that became the Synoptic Gospels.

If Paul wrote 1 or 2 Thessalonians, this would have been too early to know the Synoptic Gospels, although it is possible the author of 2 Thessalonians—if writing later than the Synoptics—observed the parallels between 1 Thessalonians and the Synoptic eschatological discourse and then made sure to add to those connections in his own account. Hartman, though originally arguing that both 1 and 2 Thessalonians were written by Paul, later changed his mind and advocated this very position.[63] A pseudonymous author could have been aware of the Synoptic eschatological discourse and also noticed its connections with Dan 7-12. This may be why 2 Thessalonians has so many elements taken from Daniel while 1 Thessalonians does not have any explicit quotations or allusions. If this is the case, the author of 2 Thessalonians has not copied the Synoptics exactly; for example, he does not use the language of "the abomination of desolation" that in both Mark 13 and Matthew 24 is the key link for the audience to realise that section of the discourse is

[63] Hartman, "Eschatology of 2 Thessalonians," 478-484.

pointing back to Daniel ("let the reader understand"). If the intention was to strengthen verbal links with the Synoptics then the author has not done a very convincing job, but he very well may have desired to create subtler links rather than directly copying them. After all, 1 Thessalonians does not share verbatim phrases with the eschatological discourse; rather, the connection is suggested by a few verbal parallels and shared themes.

The influence of the Synoptic eschatological discourse on the author of 2 Thessalonians is not an unreasonable proposal, but it does raise an important question: If the author of 2 Thessalonians did have access to one of the Synoptic accounts, which version would it have been? Or, did he know more than one? Mark 13 does not contain the thief in the night material, which is the most obvious link with 1 Thessalonians, so perhaps the author had either Matthew or Luke. Luke's thief imagery is not included in this discourse but rather appears earlier, in chapter 12. On the other hand, Luke 21:34-36 has striking parallels with 1 Thess 5:3 that the author of 2 Thessalonians may have noticed. However, in Luke's account the parallels with Daniel are more limited than in Mark or Matthew. It seems that Matthew's account is the most likely to have influenced 2 Thessalonians, for out of the three gospels it has the most parallels with 1 Thessalonians and additionally directly references Daniel in 24:15. In this case, the author has condensed Matthew's multiple false prophets and false messiahs into a singular figure, the man of lawlessness, who produces all the false signs and omens. There are, however, a few aspects that require further explanation. For example, there is no parallel for the figure of ὁ κατέχων in the Synoptics. Furthermore, there is no eschatological battle in the Synoptics such as that suggested in 2 Thess 2:8, where the Lord Jesus destroys the man of lawlessness though

there is certainly some conflict involving the temple, which invokes the imagery of the "abomination of desolation" from Dan 7-12. These could be explained as the author's own additions to and re-working of the tradition in order to answer the needs of his audience. The book of Daniel was popular during the Second Temple period, and its apocalyptic nature proved attractive to those writing their own apocalyptic or eschatological works.[64] The author has clearly not copied Matt 24 directly, but given the links between 1 Thess 4-5 and Matt 24, Hartman's proposal makes the best sense in the case of a pseudonymous 2 Thessalonians.

Shared Tradition

Though, as has just been discussed, it is possible that 1 and/or 2 Thessalonians has been influenced by the material in the Synoptic eschatological discourse, there may still be another explanation which best accounts for the evidence: if Paul wrote both 1 and 2 Thessalonians, he and the Synoptic authors all independently knew of the same pre-synoptic eschatological discourse and incorporated it into their work. This was the premise for Wenham's argument discussed above. While Wenham's reconstruction of an extensive eschatological discourse as part of a pre-synoptic gospel is far-fetched, there could still have been a pre-synoptic eschatological discourse behind both the Synoptic passages and the Thessalonian letters. Given the lack of any extensive literary parallels—

[64] The popularity of Daniel in the Second Temple period is demonstrated by the Maccabean literature, which repeatedly uses Daniel as an exemplar of faith (1 Macc 2:59-60; 3 Macc 6:6-7; 4 Macc 16:3; 18:12-13; cf. 2 Esd 12:11). Josephus focuses on Daniel in *Ant.* 10.186-281; 11.337; 12.322. Furthermore, 8 MSS of Daniel have been identified at Qumran. The book of Revelation also demonstrates extensive influence from Daniel.

just a word here and there—many scholars find it unlikely that there was a formal, written discourse, though Jens Schröter's observation must be taken into account, "There was no fundamental difference between oral and written tradition in the first centuries of Christianity. Rather, in both spheres the analogous process of a free, living tradition can be observed, which adapted its concrete form to the respective understanding of the content."[65] Therefore, it is difficult to determine precisely what form this tradition would have taken, for in 1 and 2 Thessalonians it has clearly been adapted for the audience's specific situation.

In addition to his treatment of the Synoptic eschatological discourse mentioned above, Hartman examines 1 and 2 Thessalonians and comes to the conclusion that they share an underlying tradition with the Synoptics. Furthermore, Hartman argues, since Paul framed this material as "a word from the Lord" (1 Thess 4:15) and prior teaching the audience was already familiar with (2 Thess 2:5), this tradition must have been formulated before the 50s CE.[66] In chapter 1, it was noted that ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου ("in a word of the Lord") in 1 Thess 4:15 refers to a tradition that, at the very least, the author thought was authorised by the Lord. It is reasonable to suppose that early Jesus tradition contained an eschatological discourse similar to what is found in the Thessalonian correspondence and Synoptic Gospels. The bigger question is whether this whole tradition should be understood as based on Daniel. As noted in the previous chapter, the account in 2 Thess 2 is undoubtedly dependent on Daniel. The man of lawlessness is clearly based on the figure

[65] Schröter, *Jesus to the New Testament*, 270-271.
[66] Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted*, 211.

who causes desolation throughout Daniel 7-12, and ὁ κατέχων is based on the portrayal of the angel Michael, particularly in chapter 12. Additionally, the emphasis on a time of great tribulation before the *parousia* matches with Daniel 12:1's description of the "time of the end," which relates that after Michael arises "there shall be a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since the nations first came into existence." On the other hand, 1 Thessalonians does not demonstrate any concrete links with Daniel. It could be argued that 1 Thess 4's portrayal of Jesus's descent is taken from Dan 7, but there are no obvious signs of literary dependence on Daniel in 1 Thess 4. Thus, there is not enough evidence to claim the background to the eschatology of 1 Thessalonians rests on a midrash on Daniel. As was discussed above, the Synoptic eschatological discourse likewise cannot as a whole be understood as a midrash on Daniel, but it certainly does contain elements taken directly from Dan 7.

Given that the most significant parallels are found in Matthew's version of the discourse, Orchard argues, "the eschatological discourse of St Matthew—and that alone—provides the truly appropriate background and *milieu* for the right understanding of St Paul's teaching of the Parousia."[67] What he means by this is that 1 and 2 Thessalonians are literarily dependent upon a pre-Matthean eschatological discourse, which the gospel writer later incorporates in full into his narrative. Orchard believes that Matt 24 is thus the most primitive version of what we find in Mark, Luke, and the Thessalonian correspondence.[68] Though he does not fully draw this out in his article, Orchard does imply

[67] J. B. Orchard, "Thessalonians and the Synoptic Gospels," *Bib* 19 (1938): 19-42, 19-20.
[68] Ibid., 38

that Matthean priority makes the best sense of this, for his key point is that Matthew's eschatological discourse is the only one of the Synoptics that brings together all these eschatological points in exactly the same way as 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and since 1 and 2 Thessalonians made use of this source, then this is proof Matthew has the most original version.[69] To some extent, Orchard may be right that there was a formal eschatological account known to Paul and later expanded in the Synoptics. Yet, Mark's account also has most of the significant parallels apart from the thief imagery, and given the popularity of the thief motif in early Christianity, I do not think it unlikely that 1 Thessalonians had access to it independently of the eschatological discourse.[70] Furthermore, Matthew's addition of the trumpet is best understood as his own redactional treatment of the discourse in Mark, as is his addition of the thief and watchman parables. Since γρηγορέω appears in Mark 13:35, Matthew added other eschatological material he knew that also contained an imperative to "keep watch."

Alternatively, Alan Garrow argues that Didache 16 represents the eschatological tradition that is behind 1 Thessalonians, forming the material to which the "word of the

[69] Ibid., 38-39n1. Orchard states that he does not know how to reconcile his conclusions with 2DH, but that proponents "cannot afford to ignore the evidence for the dependence of Thessalonians on the First Gospel."

[70] 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 3:3; 16:14; Gos. Thom. 21. Claus-Peter März, "Das Gleichnis vom Dieb: Überlegungen zur Verbindung von Lk 12,39 par Mt 24,43 und 1 Thess 5,2.4," *The Four Gospels 1992: Festscrift Frans Neirynck*, ed. F. van Segbroeck et al., BETL 100 (Leuven: Leuven University Press , 1992), 1:633-648, argues Paul knew the parable of the thief attached to the parable of the watchmen and possibly the parable of the steward as well. Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:385-386; Christine Jacobi, *Jesusüberlieferung bei Paulus? Analogien zwischen den ecthen Paulusbriefen und den synoptischen Evangelien*, BZNW 213 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 185, designates the thief motif as part of an oral "vigilance complex" about the last days which Paul, Luke, and Matthew all received and adapted individually.

Lord" refers in 4:15.[71] This is related to his argument that the Didache is the source of some of the shared material between Matthew and Luke.[72] While there is no consensus on the date of the Didache, the generally accepted range is between 70-150 CE, making this too late to have impacted any genuinely Pauline letters.[73] Garrow does, however, qualify his claim, "The question of whether the Didache itself, or the sources used by the Didache, was known to Paul and the Thessalonians is left open."[74] This qualification makes his hypothesis more conceivable. However, the most striking parallel between Matt 24 and 1 Thess 5—that of the thief in the night—is missing from the Didache, which instead has the image of keeping lamps lit and being dressed for action as in Luke 12:35. It is true that, like Matthew, Didache 16 includes a trumpet as one of the accompanying signs of the Lord's arrival, but as discussed above this is a common image in theophanic and day of YHWH texts and so cannot be seen as a telling parallel. A more interesting connection is that, like 1 Thess 4 but unlike the Synoptic discourse, Did. 16.6 refers to the end-time resurrection of the dead. The process of composition for the Didache is complicated, and Garrow's

[71] Alan J. P. Garrow, "The Eschatological Tradition behind 1 Thessalonians: *Didache* 16," *JSNT* (2009): 191-215.
[72] Garrow, "Extant Instance of Q."
[73] Jonathan A. Draper, "Conclusion: Missing Pieces in the Puzzle or Wild Good Chase? A Retrospect and Prospect," in *The Didache: A Missing Piece of the Puzzle in Early Christianity*, ed. Jonathan A. Draper and Clayton N. Jefford, ECL 14 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 529-543, 530; Aaron Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope, and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50-70 CE* (New York: Newman, 2003) argues the Didache is based on oral catechesis dating from 50-70 CE; cf. Thomas O'Loughlin, *The Didache: A Window on the Earliest Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 26. Kurt Niederwimmer, *The Didache: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis; Fortress, 1998), 53 argues for a date of ca. 110-120. Bart D. Ehrman, ed. and trans., *The Apostolic Fathers, Volume I: I Clement. II Clement. Ignatius. Polycarp. Didache*, LCL 24 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 411, suggests that while the Didachist himself gathered the various traditions together around 100 CE, the apocalyptic discourse "could have been composed almost any time during the first two centuries."
[74] Garrow, "Eschatological Tradition," 210n27.

premises in his article are based on his arguments that Matthew used the Didache, as discussed above. However, the majority of scholars believe that either Matthew and the Didache are independent of each other or that the Didache is based on Matthew, not the other way around. If the Didache was influenced by Matthew, then that can best explain the parallels with 1 and 2 Thessalonians as well. However, if its eschatological material is independent from Matthew, it would be another witness to this similar tradition shared with 1 and 2 Thessalonians.[75]

In response to the comparative lack of direct verbal parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians and the Synoptic Gospels, McNicol suggests that Paul "knew a body of eschatological sayings attributed to Jesus" and then crafted his own eschatological teaching around these sayings.[76] Yet, the structural parallels are stronger than just two authors independently combining various eschatological traditions. First Thessalonians broadly follows the same pattern as in the Synoptics: a description of the *parousia* is given, followed by a warning about the unexpected timing of that event, and concluded with an exhortation to watchfulness. Likewise, the material in 2 Thessalonians appears to follow a similar pattern as the parallel material in the Synoptics: an exhortation not to fear false rumours, a description of the figure/object who will defile the temple, and the decisive return of Jesus, who ends his people's tribulations. Neither of the letters is an exact replication of the material in the Synoptic Gospels as both diverge from what is found in

[75] John S. Kloppenborg, "Didache 16.6-8 and Special Matthaean Tradition," *ZNW* 70 (1979), 54-67, argues, "Matthew combined Marcan tradition with another free-floating apocalyptic tradition which had been incorporated into the Didache quite independently of Matthew" (67). Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:327.
[76] McNicol, *Jesus' Directions*, 12.

the Synoptic accounts in several ways. For example, in 1 Thess 4 the believers are caught up in clouds, whereas in the Synoptics the clouds serve as the vehicle for the Son of Man's descent. Additionally, 1 Thessalonians focuses on the resurrection of the dead when Jesus returns while the Synoptics do not mention resurrection at all. The material in 2 Thess 2 is heavily influenced by Dan 7-12 just as the Synoptic eschatological discourse is, but the author uses different language from those chapters and his main focus is on one particular figure opposed to God rather than a specific action in Judea. However, the similar pattern of this material hints at a basic eschatological discourse that is used by both 1 and 2 Thessalonians and the gospel writers in their own eschatological accounts.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, it has become obvious that there is shared eschatological tradition between 1 and 2 Thessalonians and the Synoptic eschatological discourse. If we were to take just 1 Thessalonians on its own then it is certainly true that the only clear evidence of an early and widespread tradition is to be found in 1 Thess 5:2.[77] However, because 1 and 2 Thessalonians must be read together the extensive parallels between the Thessalonian correspondence and the Synoptic Gospels (particularly Matthew) must be accounted for. If 1 and 2 Thessalonians are shown to both be by Paul, then this means the apostle is aware of and uses an eschatological tradition which has combined Jesus's sayings about the suddenness of the Son of Man's return and the need to keep watch with the Daniel material about signs and a period of lawlessness still to come before the end. Both of these traditions

[77] So Tuckett, "Synoptic Tradition," 182; Jacobi, *Jesusüberlieferung bei Paulus?* 185.

have been applied to the still-future return of Jesus. If one of the letters is not by Paul, then one of the authors is likely aware of the Synoptic tradition and thus incorporates that into his own letter to match with the other half of the Thessalonian correspondence (as proposed by Hartman). The conclusion can only finally be made upon the decision of authorship, to which I turn in the following chapter

In either case, 1 and 2 Thessalonians together reflect a tradition also found in the Synoptic Gospels: the sudden arrival of the day of the Lord does not preclude anticipatory signs of preceding events for which believers should keep watch. This is further proof that the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians cannot be understood as incompatible. The structure of this shared tradition can dissolve the supposed differences between the two letters. In 1 Thessalonians, the author focuses on the suddenness of "the day of the Lord," though he urges that when it does come it will not be a surprise for believers, while 2 Thessalonians outlines several events that will occur before the day of the Lord. This same pattern has been observed in the Synoptic eschatological discourse: the events of the end will come suddenly, but those keeping watch will not be surprised, for other events must happen first.

CHAPTER 5: RECONSIDERING ISSUES OF CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

Up to this point, I have left the thorny question of the authorship of 2 Thessalonians to the side in order to focus more critically on the particular eschatological elements of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. My method has been shaped by the SBL Pauline Theology Consultation's approach to the Pauline corpus in which they examined the Pauline letters without focusing on authorship. However, in response to their methodology, Richard rightly argues, "Bracketing the question of authorship can lead to a serious consideration of the letter's structures and rhetorical goals but in the long run can only lead to a limited view of the document and its purpose. Approaching the letter from a Pauline or a Paulinist perspective is in the final analysis a necessity since the questions of authorship, audience, and epistolary occasion are too basic to be ignored or slighted."[1] Richard is certainly correct, and it is for this reason that in the final chapter I now return to questions of critical introduction. The results of this chapter will impact the final interpretation of these two letters.

In particular, rather than depending on the scholarly consensus I want to fully re-open the questions of authorship and occasion. The authorship of 2 Thessalonians remains a hotly contested debate, with scholarship fairly evenly divided on the issue.[2]

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[1] Richard, *Thessalonians*, 27.

[2] In support of authenticity: Dobschütz, *Thessalonicher-Briefe*; Dibelius, *Thessalonicher*; Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*; Best, *Thessalonians*; Morris, *Thessalonians*; Marshall, *Thessalonians*; Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*; Witherington, *Thessalonians*; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*; Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica*; Fee, *Thessalonians*; Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians? A Fresh Look at an Old Problem," *JSNT* 35 (2012): 150-175; Campbell, *Framing Paul*; de Villiers, "Glorious Presence."

There has been an increasing movement to regard it as pseudonymous in recent years, but the results of the debate tend to fall along ideological lines. This is one reason why it is so important to give 2 Thessalonians a fair hearing, which can be done if we leave authorship to the side for the initial analysis, as has been the case in the preceding chapters. For this reason, it is only in this final chapter that I turn to consider the authorship of 2 Thessalonians. Along with this, the authorship of 1 Thessalonians must also be reconsidered, for it is possible a theory of pseudonymity may better explain the relationship between the two letters.

TWO PSEUDONYMOUS LETTERS

The great majority of interpreters regard 1 Thessalonians as authentic, and its position as one of the seven "undisputed" Pauline letters is firmly fixed as the consensus view. Yet, 1 Thessalonians has not been universally accepted as authentic; the most vocal opponent of its authenticity was F. C. Baur.[3] He questioned the authenticity of both 1 and 2 Thessalonians, though with regard to 1 Thessalonians his argument failed to take hold

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Arguing for pseudonymity: Masson, *Thessaloniciens*; Trilling, *zweite Brief*; John A. Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?" *NTS* 25 (1979): 131-145; Willi Marxsen, *Der zweite Thessalonicherbrief*, ZBK 11/2 (Zürich: TVZ, 1982); Raymond F. Collins, *Letters that Paul Did not Write* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988); Franz Laub, *Eschatologische Verkündigung und Lebensgestaltung nach Paulus: Eine Untersuchung zum Wirken des Apostel beim Aufbau der Gemeinde in Thessalonike*, BU 10 (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1973), 156-157; Menken, *2 Thessalonians*; Richard, *Thessalonians*; Légasse, *Thessaloniciens*; Victor Paul Furnish, *1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007); Gaventa, *Thessalonians*; Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery*, 156-171; Boring, *Thessalonians*; Niklas, *Thessalonicherbrief*.

[3] Baur develops objections first raised by Karl Schrader, *Der Apostel Paulus*, 5 vols. (Leipzig: Kollmann, 1836: 23-24.) Baur's conclusions have generally been refuted, but recently the authorship of 1 Thessalonians has been questioned by Marlene Crüsemann, *Pseudepigraphal Letters*. Her work is discussed below.

and continues to be generally ignored in the discussion.[4] However, Baur's contribution is extremely important, for it calls into question the accepted and unexamined consensus on 1 Thessalonians. Baur argues:

> In the whole collection of the Pauline Epistles there is none so deficient in the character and substance of its materials as 1st Thessalonians.... The whole Epistle is made up of general instructions, exhortations, wishes, such as appear in the other Epistles merely as adjuncts to the principal contents; what is accessory in the other cases is here the preponderating and essential element.... The very insignificance of the contents, however, the want of any special aim and of any intelligible occasion or purpose is itself a criterion adverse to a Pauline origin.[5]

Baur further argues that 1 Thessalonians is dependent on the other Pauline letters, particularly the Corinthian correspondence, and the Acts narrative. He claims that the description of Timothy's visit to the Thessalonians and encouraging report to Paul are modelled off Titus's visit to the Corinthians and the ensuing encouragement his report to Paul brought in 2 Cor 7:5-16. Additionally, Baur argues that the description of Paul's entrance among the Thessalonians is taken from 1 Cor 2:1, 3:1, 2 Cor 1:12, and 3:2.[6] This is a unique and interesting proposal. However, one problem with this view is that the personal information given in 1 Thessalonians does not match with what is said in Acts. For example, in 1 Thess 3:1-2 the author claims, "when we could bear it no longer, we thought it good to be left alone in Athens, and we sent Timothy ... to strengthen and exhort you in your faith."

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[4] Baur, *Paul the Apostle*, 2:85-97. Baur's position on 1 Thessalonians was strongly refuted by Carl Ludwig Wilibald Grimm, "Die Echtheit der Briefe an die Thessalonicher gegen D. Baur's Angriff vertheidigt," *TSK* 23 (1850), 753-813; Richard Adelbert Lipsius, "Ueber Zweck und Veranlassung des ersten Thessalonicherbrief," *TSK* 27 (1854), 905-934; and Adolf Hilgenfeld, "Die beiden Briefe an die Thessalonicher, nach Inhalt und Ursprung," *ZWT* 5 (1862): 225-264.

[5] Baur, *Paul the Apostle*, 2:85.

[6] Ibid., 2:316-317. He also notes the similarities between 1 Cor 2:4 and 1 Thess 1:5; 1 Cor 11:1 and 1 Thess 1:6; Rom 1:8 and 1 Thess 1:8; 2 Cor 7:2 and 1 Thess 2:5.

This would imply that Timothy was with Paul in Athens and that Paul sent him from there to check in on the Thessalonians. Acts 17, on the other hand, has Paul alone in Athens while Silas and Timothy remained in Beroea and they are only said to reunite in Corinth, according to Acts 18:5. Perhaps, then, the author did not use Acts for his account but did use the Corinthian correspondence. Baur responds that the reason it does not match the Acts account is that the author wants to stick closely to the Corinthian account;[7] however, a pseudonymous author could have easily fixed this issue by having Paul send Timothy from Corinth in 1 Thess 3 rather than from Athens. Though there are a few points of similarity between 1 Thess 3 and 2 Cor 7 (e.g. mutual longing to see each other; encouragement/joy despite affliction), the situations are strikingly different. In 2 Corinthians, the reason Paul had been worried about the audience is because of the rebuke he had sent them in the "letter of tears." In 1 Thessalonians, the author is worried because of the persecutions they underwent, fearing it may have harmed their faith. In 2 Corinthians Paul is relieved because the Corinthians have repented while in 1 Thessalonians the author is encouraged because the audience has persevered. The supposed parallels Baur notes in 1 and 2 Corinthians with the description of Paul's behaviour among the Thessalonians are even weaker:

1 & 2 Cor	**1 Thess**
1 Cor 2:1: Κἀγὼ ἐλθὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἦλθον οὐ καθ᾽ ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ. And when I came to you, brothers, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you by lofty words or wisdom	1:9: αὐτοὶ γὰρ περὶ ἡμῶν ἀπαγγέλλουσιν ὁποίαν εἴσοδον ἔσχομεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς For they themselves report concerning us what sort of entrance we had among you

[7] Ibid., 2:322.

2 Cor 1:12: Ἡ γὰρ καύχησις ἡμῶν αὕτη ἐστίν, τὸ μαρτύριον τῆς συνειδήσεως ἡμῶν, ὅτι ἐν ἁπλότητι καὶ εἰλικρινείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, [καὶ] οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ σαρκικῇ ἀλλ᾽ ἐν χάριτι θεοῦ, ἀνεστράφημεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, περισσοτέρως δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς. For this is our boast, the testimony of our conscience, that we have behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not in earthly wisdom but in the grace of God—and especially toward you.	2:1: Αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴδατε, ἀδελφοί, τὴν εἴσοδον ἡμῶν τὴν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅτι οὐ κενὴ γέγονεν For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain 2:5: Οὔτε γάρ ποτε ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας ἐγενήθημεν, καθὼς οἴδατε, οὔτε ἐν προφάσει πλεονεξίας, θεὸς μάρτυς For we never once in words of flattery, just as you know, nor with a pretext for greed, God is witness 2:9: Μνημονεύετε γάρ, ἀδελφοί, τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν μόχθον· νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαί τινα ὑμῶν ἐκηρύξαμεν εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ For you remember, brothers, our labour and toil. Night and day we worked so as not to be a burden to any of you while we proclaimed the gospel of God to you
1 Cor 3:1: Κἀγώ, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἠδυνήθην λαλῆσαι ὑμῖν ὡς πνευματικοῖς ἀλλ᾽ ὡς σαρκίνοις, ὡς νηπίοις ἐν Χριστῷ. And I also, brothers, could not speak to you as spiritual people but as fleshly people, like infants in Christ.	2:11: καθάπερ οἴδατε, ὡς ἕνα ἕκαστον ὑμῶν ὡς πατὴρ τέκνα ἑαυτοῦ As you know, we dealt with each of you as a father with his children
2 Cor 3:2: ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε, ἐγγεγραμμένη ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν, γινωσκομένη καὶ ἀναγινωσκομένη ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων, You are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by all people	2:10: ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες καὶ ὁ θεός, ὡς ὁσίως καὶ δικαίως καὶ ἀμέμπτως ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐγενήθημεν You are our witnesses, and God also, how pure and upright and blameless we were to you who believe

While it is true there are connections between 1 Thessalonians and the Corinthian correspondence in particular, especially in the salutations and signatures, there are no

clear parallels that would indicate the author modelled 1 Thessalonians off these Pauline letters.

In regard to eschatology, Baur argues that 1 Thess 4:13-18, while agreeing with 1 Cor 15 on many points, goes beyond what is said there and the eschatological teaching it offers is far more concrete than anything else found in Paul's letters.[8] I would question how, exactly, Baur views this as a more concrete treatment than what we find in 1 Cor 15, but he does not expand on his argument. In several ways, 1 Cor 15 gives more concrete information considering its treatment of Christ's current reign and of the resurrection body. There are certainly connections between 1 Thess 4:13-18 and 1 Cor 15, but these connections suggest 1 Cor 15 is a development or expansion of the eschatology first expressed in 1 Thess 4. In his first treatment of the Thessalonian correspondence Baur, significantly, does not find any substantive conflict between the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians.[9] Instead, Baur's main issue with the teaching in 2 Thessalonians seems to be that it is too Jewish, given its dependence on Dan 7-12, for Paul to have reasonably held these views, for he argues, "We must not overlook the fact that in this matter of the second coming of Christ, as much as in anything else, the strongest repulsion must have been discovered between the Pauline view of Christianity and the Judaeo-Christian view."[10] However, Baur later changes his view of 2 Thessalonians, suggesting it was not based on Dan 7-12 but instead penned by a

[8] Ibid., 2:89.

[9] Ibid., 2:93. Baur argues, "It is perfectly conceivable that one and the same writer, if he lived so much in the thought of the *parousia* as the two Epistles testify, should have looked at this mysterious subject in different circumstances and from different points of view, and so expressed himself regarding it in different ways."

[10] Ibid., 2:90

pseudonymous author in the first years of Vespasian's reign, after the unrest of the "year of the four emperors," when the *Nero redivivus* motif was heightened.[11] Yet, there is no evidence that 2 Thessalonians is influenced by the *Nero redivivus* motif; instead, as demonstrated in chapter 2 above, 2 Thess 2 is fundamentally informed by Dan 7-12. Furthermore, if the letter is to be linked to a contemporary event it fits much better with the Gaian crisis of the 40s.[12] Still, Baur raises the important question of why, if 2 Thessalonians is genuine, Paul never again in his letters mentions the man of lawlessness or any events that precede the day of the Lord.[13] Ironically, the fact that the man of lawlessness does not appear in 1 Thessalonians is one piece of evidence for Baur that 1 Thessalonians was written significantly after 2 Thessalonians, once expectation of the Antichrist had waned. Baur does not consider that, if the man of lawlessness is indeed foreign to Pauline eschatology, then its absence from 1 Thessalonians could instead be proof of that letter's authenticity.

Though there were occasional suggestions that 1 Thessalonians was not genuine, Baur remained one of the only people throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

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[11] Baur seems to change his view because he does not believe Paul would have held onto these Jewish eschatological views. "It has hitherto been considered, and I myself formerly held this view, that what we have in 2 Thess. ii. 1 *sq*. is the Christian view of Antichrist as it had arisen from a Jewish basis, chiefly in accordance with the prophecies of the book of Daniel; described in the chief features which it had assumed up to that time. This however gave too much room to suppose that the apostle Paul shared in the Jewish views of his contemporaries on the subject; and whatever trouble we may take to show his eschatology to be different from that of this Epistle, we shall always be met by the assertion that the one as well as the other lies inside the Jewish circle of ideas on the subject" (Appendix III: "The Two Epistles to the Thessalonians: Their Genuineness and Their Bearing on the Doctrine of the Parousia of Christ" in *Paul the Apostle*, 2:323-324).

[12] As will be discussed below, Douglas Campbell suggests that Paul's eschatological teaching to the Thessalonians was heavily influenced by the Gaian crisis.

[13] Baur, *Paul the Apostle*, 2:334.

to suggest both Thessalonian letters were pseudonymous.[14] However, an intriguing proposal has recently been brought forward by Marlene Crüsemann.[15] In contrast with Baur, Crüsemann argues that 1 Thessalonians is written first, with 2 Thessalonians then written in response to what its author perceives as a forged letter. As with Baur, one of Crüsemann's main objections to 1 Thessalonians is the treatment of the Jews in 1 Thess 2:14-16, which she argues is inconsistent with what he says in his other letters. This objection has been dealt with in chapter 1, where it is clear that the vitriol against the Jews in question here is because of their refusal to allow the gospel to go forth, which is contrasted with how the gospel has sounded forth freely from the Thessalonians throughout Macedonia and Achaia. Furthermore, it is not a comment on Jews universally, but rather on those specific ones who have opposed God's now-revealed Messiah and his messengers. This is not necessarily in opposition to his comments on his kinfolk in other letters. This is not Crüsemann's sole argument against the authenticity of 1 Thessalonians, but it plays a large part in her discussion. On the other hand, one of Crüsemann's most interesting points is that, besides the three authors themselves, no other person is mentioned by name in 1 Thessalonians, which is highly unusual.[16] The only other letter that lacks any personal names apart from the author(s) is, in fact, 2 Thessalonians. In other letters of Paul, there are references to people who were likely the letter-bearers (Phil 2:25; Rom 16:1; cf. Col 4:7-9; Eph 6:21), whereas there is no such indication in 1 or 2 Thessalonians.

[14] Robert Scott, *The Pauline Epistles* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1909), 215-233, argues that Silvanus and Timothy are the real authors, with Paul's name added as an honorific.
[15] Marlene Crüsemann, *Pseudepigraphal Letters*, translated from the 2010 German original, *Die pseudepigraphen Briefe*.
[16] Ibid., 109.

No particular people in the community are greeted or remembered, which means there is no specific link to identifiable members of the community. Crüsemann concludes from this that 1 Thessalonians was never actually sent and that the multiple references to the prior knowledge of the community are in line with pseudepigraphic methods. On the other hand, other Pauline pseudepigrapha do contain references to other people; for example, Artemas and Tychicus are mentioned as potential letter bearers in Tit 3:12, and Zenas and Apollos are both mentioned in Tit 3:13 as members of the community. It is common for a pseudonymous author to create a fictive world for his letter, which includes references to figures who would be associated with the putative author. In this regard, 1 and 2 Thessalonians are odd in their lack of personal references not only among the undisputed Pauline letters but indeed among the disputed letters as well.

Crüsemann also argues that the authors of 2 Thessalonians recognised 1 Thessalonians as a forgery and sought to replace its eschatology. As she explains, "Jewish-Christian 2 Thessalonians documents an alternative historical scenario over against that in the pagan-Christian-oriented 1 Thessalonians, which had already abandoned the whole Jewish people, both historically and in the history of salvation."[17] However, as I demonstrated in the comparison of the two eschatologies, 2 Thessalonians should be understood as *supplementing* 1 Thessalonians, not replacing it. The two letters together present an eschatological scenario we also find in the Synoptic eschatological discourse. Furthermore, this judgment of a gentile 1 Thessalonians and a Jewish 2 Thessalonians is heavily based on her understanding of 1 Thess 2:14-16, which I believe is

[17] Ibid., 295.

a misreading of the purpose of 1 Thess 2:14-16 within the argument of 1 Thessalonians. Therefore, Crüsemann's reconstruction of a situation in which gentile and Jewish Christ-followers are debating over their relationship to the Jewish people may be historically plausible, but it is not supported by the evidence in either 1 or 2 Thessalonians. Ultimately, it is difficult to imagine a situation in which two related letters attributed to Paul are composed pseudonymously but separately by the end of the first century. Whether 1 or 2 Thessalonians was written first, the first letter would have needed to gain popularity as a Pauline letter before the second one was composed by a later author. There would then need to be sufficient time for this second letter to gain popularity before it was also regarded as authoritative.

PSEUDONYMOUS 1 THESSALONIANS, AUTHENTIC 2 THESSALONIANS

I know of no scholar who holds to the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians while denying that of 1 Thessalonians. It is an interesting thought experiment, however, given that Baur argued 1 Thessalonians was both pseudonymous and written after 2 Thessalonians. As Baur has demonstrated, it is possible that the extensive literary parallels and shared structure between the two letters can be explained by the author of 1 Thessalonians using 2 Thessalonians as a template. Additionally, as will be discussed in-depth below, other scholars have argued for a reversed order with 2 Thessalonians coming first, though these judgments are made on the assumption of two authentic letters. Thus, it is at least theoretically possible that 1 Thessalonians came second and was written by a pseudonymous author. However, it is clear from the discussion in the previous section that

the case for a pseudonymous 1 Thessalonians is indefensible. A pseudonymous author of 1 Thessalonians would have to insert personal information into chapters 2 and 3, none of which appears in 2 Thessalonians. The author of 1 Thessalonians could have used material from the Corinthian correspondence and the Acts accounts in order to craft these personal sections, as Baur argued. However, the same problem noted in the previous section arises in this reconstruction—the personal information included does not line up with Acts for the author of 1 Thessalonians claims to have been left alone in Athens after he sent Timothy to the Thessalonians. If a pseudonymous author had been following the narrative in Acts, he would know that Timothy was with Paul in Corinth, not Athens. The simplest explanation for the difference in these two accounts is that 1 Thessalonians was written by Paul. Furthermore, if only one of these letters is pseudonymous, all signs point to 2 Thessalonians. There is simply no plausible *Sitz im Leben* for a pseudonymous 1 Thessalonians. There are, however, significant questions about the authorship of 2 Thessalonians that still need to be addressed.

AUTHENTIC 1 THESSALONIANS, PSEUDONYMOUS 2 THESSALONIANS

In 1801, J. E. C. Schmidt became one of the first to highlight what he saw as the incompatible eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. However, this did not cause him to question the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians as a whole; rather, he argues that it is just 2:1-12 which should be regarded as a non-Pauline interpolation.[18] As he claims, "Man nehme diese zwölf Verse weg, und sehe noch, ob der Zusammenhang gestört, —oder ob er nicht hierdurch

[18] Schmidt, "Vermutungen," 161.

zuerst hergestellt wird? Der dreizehnte Vers des zweiten Kapitels schließt in Ansehung seines Inhalts genau an das Ende des ersten Kapitels an."[19] Schmidt then suggests that someone associated with the Montanists inserted this section into a Pauline letter, because of the sect's emphasis on "solchen Träumen vom Antichrist" and because, according to Schmidt, Irenaeus and Tertullian—both associated with Montanists—are the first to quote this passage.[20] It has been objected that without 2:1-12, the letter has little substance,[21] yet there is a good deal of substance in the rest of the letter; in chapter 1 the author treats the issue of persecution in the community and in chapter 3 he deals with the problem of "the disorderly." Both of these are problems mentioned in 1 Thessalonians, so it is possible a later letter addressed a situation in which these two issues had grown worse. However, it is the case that without 2:1-12 the body of the letter is essentially missing, and so it seems unlikely that only this section of the letter is pseudonymous. Furthermore, in light of my demonstration of the compatibility of these two eschatologies, Schmidt's fundamental argument is disproved and so his conclusions cannot stand.

While Schmidt laid the groundwork for considering 2 Thessalonians as pseudonymous, Wrede was the one who finally launched an influential case against the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians that continues to impact the debate today.[22] He particularly focuses on the literary parallels between the two letters, arguing that though there are some suspicious differences in the two eschatologies, they do not provide strong enough

[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Cf. Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 28.
[22] Wrede, *Echtheit der zweiten Thessalonicher-briefs*.

evidence on which to determine pseudonymity.[23] However, the clear literary parallels—which Wrede considers completely objective evidence—do. Though Wrede made a compelling case for pseudonymity, commentators such as Dobschütz, Harnack, and Dibelius continued to support authenticity, as have the majority of commentators since. In fact, Trilling—largely following in Wrede's footsteps—was the first to write a commentary based on the pseudonymity of 2 Thessalonians, but only in 1980. Today, scholars who support the pseudonymity of 2 Thessalonians generally focus on four major arguments: (1) differences in theology, particularly eschatology, between the two, (2) the difference in tone in 2 Thessalonians, (3) the literary dependence of 2 Thessalonians upon 1 Thessalonians, and (4) the claim of authenticity in 2 Thess 3:17.

Theology

The first, and most often made, argument against the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians is that its theology, particularly its eschatology, is too different from that of 1 Thessalonians to come from the hand of the same author. Instead, it is argued, the pseudonymous author wants to correct aspects of eschatology in 1 Thessalonians which he regards as incorrect. However, as the comparison between the two letters in chapter 3 has shown, this argument cannot be sustained. The two eschatologies are, in fact, compatible. Furthermore, as seen in chapter 4, the reason the eschatologies are compatible is that they stem from the same early Christian eschatological tradition, which held together both signs and suddenness in

[23] Ibid., 42-45.

relation to the day of the Lord. Furthermore, difference does not inherently signify incompatibility, as Menken, himself a supporter of pseudonymity, points out:

> I believe that this difference alone is not a sufficient argument, but that it may be an argument in combination with other pieces of evidence. When we consider Paul's ideas on the resurrection of the faithful at the eschaton … we can easily observe differences between these undisputedly Pauline passages. In general, Paul is able to express his ideas in various ways, dependent upon the situation of his audiences and of himself … and when it comes to a description of what will happen at God's final intervention in human history, it is only to be expected that a variety of ideas and images will be used. This means that, as far as eschatology is concerned, it is *possible* that Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians. Whether it is also *probable*, is another matter.[24]

Thus, Menken acknowledges that the eschatologies could be reconcilable and it is only through a cumulative argument that pseudonymity can be maintained. In fact, the cumulative argument remains the most common argument for pseudonymity, since scholars often recognise the subjectivity of detecting differing theology.[25] On the other hand, as discussed in chapter 3, compatible theology is not enough to claim authenticity for 2 Thessalonians for a pseudepigrapher likely would have wanted his account to be accepted as genuine and thus would have attempted to be as consistent as possible; at the same time, if Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians it is not a guarantee that he would be consistent. Therefore, it is more useful to turn to other more empirically demonstrable differences between the two letters.

[24] Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 29-30.

[25] As Menken notes: "The differences are easily exaggerated by those who are already convinced that Paul did not write 2 Thessalonians, or minimized by those who are convinced that he did. To answer the question whether Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians or not, it is therefore safer to argue as much as possible solely on the basis of what is really perceptible" (ibid., 30).

Tone

As touched on in chapter 3, one argument made for the pseudonymity of 2 Thessalonians is that it has a different tone than 1 Thessalonians. The letter is often said to be lacking in warmth and have an authoritarian tone.[26] As Bailey notes, "The tone of II Thessalonians is official and formal.... there is a sharp, almost peremptory tone in II Thessalonians lacking in I Thessalonians.... All this means that the tone of II Thessalonians is markedly different from I Thessalonians. Yet within II Thessalonians itself there is no explanation for this change."[27] Scholars repeatedly point to the thanksgivings (1:3 and 2:13) as an example of this more formal tone, as the author writes that "we *ought* to give thanks [εὐχαριστεῖν ὀφείλομεν] to God." This is different from the simple εὐχαριστοῦμεν ("we give thanks") of 1 Thessalonians, which has suggested to some that there is distance between the author and his audience. However, there is no reason to understand this phrase as authoritarian or distant, for though it does not appear elsewhere in the New Testament, in other texts the phrase highlights the proper response people should make in light of God's actions or provision, not any particular attitude of the author.[28] It is further argued that, unlike in the first letter there are not sections about the author's relationship with the audience or his

[26] Collins, *Letters*, 222-223; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 23-34; Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 31; Boring, *Thessalonians*, 214.

[27] Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?" 137.

[28] E.g. Barn. 5.3: Οὐκοῦν ὑπερευχαριστεῖν ὀφείλομεν τῷ κυρίῳ, ὅτι καὶ τὰ παρεληλυθότα ἡμῖν ἐγνώρισεν καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐνεστῶσιν ἡμᾶς ἐσόφισεν, καὶ εἰς τὰ μέλλοντα οὐκ ἐσμὲν ἀσύνετοι. ("Therefore we ought to abundantly give thanks to the Lord, for he both made known to us the past and made us wise in the present, and as regards the future we are not without understanding"). Basil of Caesarea, *Letters* 255.13-15: Ὑπὲρ ὧν καὶ εὐχαριστεῖν ὀφείλομεν τῷ Κυρίῳ καὶ προσκυνεῖν αὐτὸν, ἵνα δῷ καὶ ἡμῖν τὴν αὐτὴν εἰρήνην, καὶ ἀπολάβωμεν ἀλλήλους μετ' ἐλευθερίας ("For this also we ought to give thanks to the Lord and to worship Him, that he might give us also the same peace and that we may receive one another with freedom").

longing for them. Instead, the focus is on correcting false theology. As Menken argues, "the Paul of 2 Thessalonians has apparently rather more to criticize in the congregation than the Paul of 1 Thessalonians," pointing to 2 Thess 2:1-12 and 3:6-12 in particular.[29] In relation to this, it is pointed out that the author emphasises his own authority in a way that he does not in 1 Thessalonians, placing a great emphasis on tradition and apostolic authority.[30] For example, in 2 Thess 2:15 the author exhorts the audience to "hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us," equating the apostle's teaching with truth. On the other hand, the author commands them to keep away from those who are not living "according to the tradition that they received from us" (3:6) and to "take note of those who do not obey what we say in this letter" (3:14).

This argument, however, is the weakest of those employed to support pseudonymity, for an author can be expected to change his tone to address different situations. Indeed, Paul does not use the same tone in every letter, nor even within the same letter. As Ehrman questions, "are all of Paul's writings necessarily warm? Even to the same congregation?"[31] In Gal 4:20 Paul himself says, "I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you." Galatians itself is a good example, for it is not a warm letter by any means. There is no thanksgiving nor are there personal greetings from any members of Paul's co-workers or to any specific individuals in the Galatian community. Paul takes great care to assert his authority in chapter 1, claiming from the first sentence his divine calling: "Paul an apostle—sent neither by human

[29] Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 31. Cf. Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?" 137.
[30] Ibid., 30. See 2 Thess 1:10; 2:14, 15; 3:4, 6-15.
[31] Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery*, 157-158.

commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father." He further argues that anyone ("even an angel from heaven") proclaiming a gospel contrary to the one he preached to them should be cursed (ἀνάθεμα) (1:8). This is of course necessary for his rhetorical purposes in this letter. Different circumstances call for different tones. It is true that 2 Thessalonians has a different tone from 1 Thessalonians; however, there are other explanations equally as plausible as pseudonymity. For example, if Paul had written 1 Thessalonians shortly before 2 Thessalonians, then the warm greetings would not be necessary to repeat for he had already expressed his great affection for them in that first letter. Furthermore, considering the situation of 2 Thessalonians indicates a dire misunderstanding, it would make sense for Paul to take a sharper tone than that of 1 Thessalonians, where he is concerned with comforting the audience. Likewise, if the situation of "the disorderly" had become critically disruptive, it would be understandable for Paul to rebuke them in a strident tone. In some ways 2 Thessalonians is more authoritative than 1 Thessalonians, but this is just as likely due to a different author as to a different underlying situation behind the two letters, for in his other letters Paul can be just as firm and authoritative as in 2 Thessalonians—if not more so. Thus, the differing tone of 2 Thessalonians provides no proof of pseudonymity; it does, however, require a plausible *Sitz im Leben* for 2 Thessalonians (more on that later).

Literary Dependence and Style

A much stronger case for pseudonymity has been found in the observed literary parallels between the two letters. Wrede was the first to abandon the eschatological argument made

by his predecessors and instead focused on these parallels as proof that the author of 2 Thessalonians had closely copied 1 Thessalonians.[32] Furthermore, the structure of the letter closely follows that of 1 Thessalonians and treats the same main themes in the same order as the first letter. There is not space in this chapter to examine every parallel in-depth; rather only the most striking ones will be evaluated.[33] These parallels appear throughout the whole of 2 Thessalonians, though there are three places where the parallels are particularly extensive. The first is found in the prescript of the letters:

1 Thess 1:1	**2 Thess 1:1-2**
Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος Paul and Silvanus and Timothy τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the father and the Lord Jesus Christ, χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη. grace to you and peace	Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος Paul and Silvanus and Timothy τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, to the church of the Thessalonians in God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ, χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη grace to you and peace ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς [ἡμῶν] καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. from God [our] father and the Lord Jesus Christ

[32] Wrede, *Echtheit der zweiten Thessalonicher-briefs*. Wrede thought the eschatologies had suspicious differences, but he argued that these were not enough to suggest pseudonymity. Rather, the case for pseudonymity had to be built on the literary dependence he championed.
[33] For monograph treatments of this topic, see: Wrede, *Echtheit der zweiten Thessalonicher-briefs*; Trilling, *Untersuchungen zum zweiten Thessalonicherbrief*. Rigaux has a thorough discussion in *Thessaloniciens*, 133-139. Cf. the charts of similarities in Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 356-357; Edgar Krentz, "A Stone That Will Not Fit: The Non-Pauline Authorship of Second Thessalonians," in *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion im frühchristlichen Briefen*, ed. Jörg Frey et al., WUNT 246 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 439-470, 459-461.

As can be seen, the first nineteen words of the two greetings are identical, apart from the added ἡμῶν of 2 Thessalonians. This makes the greetings of 1 and 2 Thessalonians the most similar of all the Pauline greetings. The greetings of 1 and 2 Corinthians are very similar as well, though they are not as strikingly identical as those of 1 and 2 Thessalonians:

1 Cor 1:1-3	**2 Cor 1:1-2**
Παῦλος κλητὸς ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ καὶ Σωσθένης ὁ ἀδελφὸς Paul called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God and Sosthenes the brother	Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφὸς Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God and Timothy the brother
τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ, to the church of God that is in Corinth,	τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ to the church of God that is in Corinth
ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις, σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν· to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all those who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, theirs and ours.	σὺν τοῖς ἁγίοις πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia,
χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

As in 1 and 2 Corinthians, the greeting of 2 Thessalonians contains the phrase χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ("grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ"); this is missing in 1 Thessalonians, which only has χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ("grace to you and peace") but not the appellation. This form is present in the greetings of all of Paul's other letters (Rom 1:7; Gal 1:3; Phil 1:2; Phlm 3; cf. Col 1:2; Eph 1:2). If 2 Thessalonians is inauthentic, then the pseudepigrapher would have needed

access to at least several of these other letters, for if he were simply copying 1 Thessalonians, "our father and Lord Jesus Christ" would not be present in the text. This is, of course, a possibility, as Paul's letters did circulate amongst the different communities of believers; however, there is no secure evidence of this circulation until the second century, so it would require a rather late date for a pseudonymous 2 Thessalonians.[34] On the other hand, if Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians then this occurrence would be explained as his usual pattern, with 1 Thessalonians being the outlier. In contrast, the address "to the church of the Thessalonians in God" is unlike any of the other letters, so this could be evidence for the dependence of 2 Thessalonians on 1 Thessalonians. Yet, there is not a standard form for addresses in Paul's letters. In 1 and 2 Corinthians, the address is "to the church of God in Corinth" (1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1). Galatians is addressed "to the churches of Galatia" (Gal 1:2), Romans "to all God's beloved who are in Rome" (Rom 1:7) and Philippians "to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi" (Phil 1:1). Considering 1 and 2 Corinthians share the same address, it is not surprising that 1 and 2 Thessalonians do as well and so this cannot be taken as evidence of pseudonymous copying.

The second extensive parallel contains the claim of "working night and day":

1 Thess 2:9	**2 Thess 3:8**
Μνημονεύετε γάρ, ἀδελφοί, τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν μόχθον· For you remember, brothers, our labour and toil.	οὐδὲ δωρεὰν ἄρτον ἐφάγομεν παρά τινος, ἀλλ' ἐν κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ we did not eat anyone's bread with paying for it, but with labour and toil

[34] The remark in 2 Pet 3:16, usually dated to the early second century, does display knowledge of multiple Pauline letters. In the mid-second century, Marcion's ten-letter collection is the first formal identification of a large Pauline corpus.

νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαί τινα ὑμῶν Night and day we worked so that we might not burden any of you ἐκηρύξαμεν εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ. while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.	νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαί τινα ὑμῶν· Night and day we worked so that we might not burden any of you

This claim appears in different contexts in the two letters. In the first, Paul uses it as a reminder of the integrity the missionaries had when they first came to the Thessalonians—they did not demand any payment in exchange for their teaching but rather supported themselves. In 2 Thessalonians, the author uses this same claim to reprimand those in the community who are being "disorderly" (ἀτάκτως) and to offer an example of how the congregation should behave. The identical language is striking. Though this same phrase does not appear elsewhere in Paul's letters, both verses do contain the pair of κόπος and μόχθος, which also appears in 2 Cor 11:27. It may be that Paul wants to point them back to his defence in 1 Thess 2 and so copies the phrase exactly to create that connection. On the other hand, this could be a clear instance of a later author copying a phrase directly from 1 Thessalonians and placing it into a different context to suit his own purposes. Either interpretation is possible.[35]

[35] Even Trilling, *zweite Brief*, 147, admits that it is possible Paul used the exact same expression twice in a short space of time, "Gegen paulinische Verfasserschaft müßte eine solche Parallele nicht notwendig sprechen, da durchaus angenommen warden könnte, daß der Apostel die Gleichen Ausdrücke kurz hintereinander zweimal verwendete." However, Trilling argues that the differing theology in this section rules this out.

The closing of the two letters is identical apart from the addition of one word in 2 Thess 3:18:

1 Thess 5:28	**2 Thess 3:18**
Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.	Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you.

This same construction occurs in 1 Cor 16:23 in the penultimate sentence of the letter, followed by "My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus." This sentence is expanded in 2 Cor 13:13 to "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you." Galatians 6:18 has the similar "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen," and Phil 4:23 has, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." Each of these letters, apart from 1 and 2 Thessalonians, have different endings to each other, though 1 Corinthians does contain the same construction as 1 and 2 Thessalonians. This could be evidence of a common expression of Paul's, or it could a pseudonymous writer copying 1 Thessalonians (and perhaps 1 Corinthians as well); the evidence is not conclusive one way or the other.

In addition to these three instances of extensive literary parallelism, there are five sets of texts that demonstrate the shared structure between these two letters:

1 Thess 1:2-3	**2 Thess 1:3-4**
Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν We give thanks to God always concerning all of you	Εὐχαριστεῖν ὀφείλομεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί, We ought to give thanks to God always concerning you, brothers,

μνείαν ποιούμενοι ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν ἡμῶν, ἀδιαλείπτως μνημονεύοντες ὑμῶν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως making mention in our prayers, constantly remembering your work of faith	καθὼς ἄξιόν ἐστιν, ὅτι ὑπεραυξάνει ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly
καὶ τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης and labour of love	καὶ πλεονάζει ἡ ἀγάπη ἑνὸς ἑκάστου πάντων ὑμῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους, and the love of each one of you all for another is increasing,
καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν, and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus before our God and Father	ὥστε αὐτοὺς ἡμᾶς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐγκαυχᾶσθαι ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τοῦ θεοῦ ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑπομονῆς ὑμῶν καὶ πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς διωγμοῖς ὑμῶν καὶ ταῖς θλίψεσιν αἷς ἀνέχεσθε therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God concerning your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and the tribulations which you endure

1 Thess 2:13	**2 Thess 2:13**
Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ ἀδιαλείπτως, For this reason we also give thanks to God unceasingly,	Ἡμεῖς δὲ ὀφείλομεν εὐχαριστεῖν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοὶ ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ κυρίου, We ought always to give thanks concerning you, brothers loved by the Lord,
ὅτι παραλαβόντες λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ' ἡμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐδέξασθε οὐ λόγον ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ καθώς ἐστιν ἀληθῶς λόγον θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἐνεργεῖται ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν. because you received the word of the message from our God you received it not as the word of men but as it is truly the word of God, which also is at work in you who believe.	ὅτι εἵλατο ὑμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἀπαρχὴν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος καὶ πίστει ἀληθείας, because God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth

1 Thess 3:11-13	2 Thess 2:16-17
Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς κατευθύναι τὴν ὁδὸν ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς· Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you.	Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς καὶ [ὁ] θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν ὁ ἀγαπήσας ἡμᾶς Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father who loved us
ὑμᾶς δὲ ὁ κύριος πλεονάσαι καὶ περισσεύσαι τῇ ἀγάπῃ εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντας καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς, And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all as we do for you,	καὶ δοὺς παράκλησιν αἰωνίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα ἀγαθὴν ἐν χάριτι, and gave eternal comfort and good hope by grace,
εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἁγιωσύνῃ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the *parousia* of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones	παρακαλέσαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας καὶ στηρίξαι ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ ἀγαθῷ. comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

1 Thess 4:1	2 Thess 3:1
Λοιπὸν οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ἐρωτῶμεν ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ, Finally, then, brothers, we ask you and exhort you in the Lord Jesus,	Τὸ λοιπὸν προσεύχεσθε, ἀδελφοί, περὶ ἡμῶν, Finally, brothers, pray for us,
ἵνα καθὼς παρελάβετε παρ' ἡμῶν τὸ πῶς δεῖ ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν καὶ ἀρέσκειν θεῷ, καθὼς καὶ περιπατεῖτε, ἵνα περισσεύητε μᾶλλον. that just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are walking, that you may abound more	ἵνα ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου τρέχῃ καὶ δοξάζηται καθὼς καὶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be glorified, just as with you

1 Thess 5:23	**2 Thess 3:16**
Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἁγιάσαι ὑμᾶς ὁλοτελεῖς, Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely	Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος τῆς εἰρήνης δῴη ὑμῖν τὴν εἰρήνην Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace
καὶ ὁλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀμέμπτως ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τηρηθείη. and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless in the *parousia* of our Lord Jesus Christ.	διὰ παντὸς ἐν παντὶ τρόπῳ. ὁ κύριος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. at all times in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

These groups of texts do not have literary parallels as extensive as the three above; what they do show is the shared themes and similar structure of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. In fact, the structure of the two letters is so similar that literary dependence has seemed the most obvious solution for many scholars. For example, Krentz demonstrates the similarities in the overarching structure of the two letters, though within the "letter body" and "paraenesis" sections he does gloss over a lot of material where there are not clear parallels between the two:[36]

1 Thess		**2 Thess**
1:1-10	A. Letter Opening	1:1-12
1:1	1. Prescript	1:1-2
1:2-10	2. Thanksgiving	1:3-12
2:1-3:13	B. Letter Body	2:1-16

[36] Modified from Krentz, "Stone That Will Not Fit," 456.

2:13	1. Thanksgiving in the middle	2:13
3:11-13	2. Benediction at the end	2:16
4:1-5:28	C. Letter close	3:1-18
4:1-5:22	1. Paraenesis	3:1-15
5:23-24	2. Peace wish	3:16
5:26	3. Greetings	3:17
5:28	4. Benediction	3:18

In the first thanksgiving of both 1 and 2 Thessalonians, faith (πίστις), love (ἀγάπη), and endurance (ὑπομονή) are all singled out; interestingly, the third part of the typical Pauline triad—hope (ἐλπίς)—is left out in 2 Thessalonians, while it does appear in 1 Thessalonians. Both letters also contain a second thanksgiving, a feature that does not appear in any other Pauline letter.[37] In 2 Thessalonians, this thanksgiving has been combined with the wish-prayer of 2:16-17, which resembles that of 1 Thess 3:11-13, though the order of God and Jesus has been swapped in 2 Thessalonians and "Christ" has been added into the formula. In both letters, the author uses λοιπόν ("finally") to transition into the final section of the letter, though in 2 Thessalonians it follows the eschatological section whereas in 1 Thessalonians it precedes it. Additionally, both letters end with a prayer invoking the God—or in 2 Thessalonians, the Lord—of peace. The themes treated by 2 Thessalonians

[37] Though, it should be noted that Galatians does not have a thanksgiving at all, which is unusual and suggests his letter patterns are not fixed.

are persecution, eschatology, and "the disorderly," all of which occur in 1 Thessalonians as well. The only significant sections of 1 Thessalonians missing from 2 Thessalonians are those that contain personal information about Paul and his co-workers; this feature will be further examined below.

The rest of the observed parallels in 2 Thessalonians are not as striking as those already discussed. Both letters, for example, use the construction "the churches of God" (1 Thess 2:14: τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ; 2 Thess 1:4: ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τοῦ θεοῦ). However, 1 Cor 11:16 has the same construction, and the singular "church of God" is mentioned in 1 Cor 1:2, 10:32, 11:22, 15:9, 2 Cor 1:1, and Gal 1:13. While this singular construction is used to speak of specific churches, in 1 and 2 Thessalonians (as well as in 1 Cor 11:16) the plural fits the context, for in both passages the author is writing about churches in multiple locations, not one specific community. Therefore, this parallel is neither unique nor convincing. Other supposed parallels between the letters are similarly ambiguous and scholars interpret them differently, with Malherbe claiming, "There are similarities between the two letters, but they are not as great as is frequently thought, and they differ in importance,"[38] while Menken argues these seemingly insignificant parallels add to the cumulative argument for pseudonymity.[39] In contrast to these similarities, it has been repeatedly noted that the parallels disappear in one section of the letter, 2:1-12, precisely where the eschatology is said to differ.[40] Yet, though the literary parallels disappear there are still

[38] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 357.
[39] Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 38: "There are of course several points of agreement which are not very impressive when taken in isolation, but one should pay attention to the cumulative impact of major and minor similarities."
[40] Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, 135; Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 38; Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 199.

shared ideas. For example, 2 Thess 2:1 has the same idea as 1 Thess 4:13-18 of the *parousia* of Jesus resulting in the gathering of believers to be with him. Furthermore, as has been argued in the preceding chapters, if the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians are two sides of a traditional eschatological schema, it is not surprising that they would not have literary parallels. The author is dealing with a different problem in 2 Thessalonians than the problem behind 1 Thess 4:13-5:11. Here, the problem is that the *parousia* has not come at all, whereas in 1 Thessalonians the problem is that it is delayed. Thus, the author appeals to different parts of the eschatological tradition, which accounts for the lack of literary parallel in this section. The author certainly is introducing new material in this section, whereas in the rest of the letter he can broadly follow what had already been written in 1 Thessalonians. In summary, the similarities between these two letters are significant though not as pronounced as has sometimes been claimed. There are several extensive literary parallels, but even more arresting is the treatment of the same themes in the same order. This fact must be considered and explained in any reconstruction of the historical occasion of 2 Thessalonians.

While, on the one hand, the structure of 2 Thessalonians is regarded as too similar to 1 Thessalonians to be authentic, on the other hand the epistle's style is regarded as too different. For example, certain common phrases, like "in Christ"—which occurs in every undisputed letter—do not appear in 2 Thessalonians. In contrast, the construction for the thanksgiving—εὐχαριστεῖν ὀφείλομεν—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament; Paul consistently uses εὐχαριστέω on its own in his thanksgivings.[41] Additionally, the author

[41] 1 Thess 1:2; 2:13; Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4; Phil 1:3; Phlm 1:4; cf. Col 1:3.

shows a preference for formulations with πᾶς ("all," "every").[42] In response, scholars have argued that the style and vocabulary is not any less Pauline than 1 Thessalonians. For example, Rigaux claims: "De l'examen du vocabulaire et du style de Paul, nous avons conclu que *II Thess.* n'est pas en moins bonne position que *I Thess.*"[43] Indeed, in many discussions of style the judgments are subjective as the scholar who leans towards pseudonymity will likely find evidence to support a differing style while the one who tends to authenticity will find ways to reconcile any possible differences. Because of this subjective nature of past stylistic analyses, recently scholars have attempted to find more objective methods of measuring stylistic variation, which has been aided by the development and refinement of computer analysis. Morton—a pioneer in the use of computers to analyse the Greek New Testament—focused on univariate statistics such as sentence-length, *hapax legomena*, and the position of articles and other common words,[44] though his methods have been repeatedly criticised.[45] Kenny was one of the early users of multivariate methods, and his

[42] 2 Thess 1:3, 4, 10, 11; 2:9, 17; 3:2, 6, 16, 17.

[43] Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, 133. Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 32, agrees that the vocabulary is not any less Pauline than the undisputed letters. However, in terms of style Menken argues 2 Thessalonians lacks typical Pauline features. In fact, for Menken style is the key determinative for pseudonymity.

[44] See, e.g., A. Q. Morton, *Literary Detection: How to Prove Authorship and Fraud in Literature and Documents* (Epping: Bowker, 1978); A. Q Morton. and James McLeman, *Christianity and the Computer* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1964); idem., *Paul, the Man and the Myth* (London: Harper & Row, 1966).

[45] Andrews W. Pitts, "Style and Pseudonymity in Pauline Scholarship: A Register Based Configuration," in *Paul and Pseudepigraphy*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Gregory P. Fewster, Pauline Studies 8 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 114-115, argues: "We know that Morton's methods (a fairly typical representative of the pseudonymity interpretation) do not consistently yield reliable results, still commentators cite him as having shown something substantial about Pauline authorship." See further critiques in P. F. Johnson, "The Use of Statistics in the Analysis of the characteristics of Pauline Writing," *NTS* 20 (1973): 92-100; M. W. A. Smith, "Hapax Legomena in Prescribed Positions: An Investigation of Recent Proposals to Resolve Problems of Authorship," *LLC* 2 (1987): 145-152; M. B. O'Donnell, "Linguistic Fingerprints or Style by Numbers? The Use of Statistics in the

stylometric analysis demonstrated that 2 Thessalonians is actually closer in style to the genuine letters than is 1 Thessalonians.[46] Based on his analysis of ninety-nine language features, Kenny determined that the distance of the letters from "prototypical Paul" followed the order: Romans, Philippians, 2 Timothy, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, Philemon, 1 Corinthians, and Titus.[47] Kenny further concluded that only Titus should be considered non-Pauline, though he does admit that this makes Paul an "unusually versatile author."[48] However, Schmidt argued the grammatical forms that Kenny analysed were not significant for analysing style; instead he focused on syntactical complexity, which he argued was high in 2 Thessalonians compared to the authentic letters.[49] This is particularly noticeable in 2 Thess 1:3-12, which consists of one long sentence. According to Schmidt's results, in several ways 2 Thessalonians is stylistically reminiscent of Colossians and Ephesians.[50] A number of other computer-assisted stylometric analyses of 2 Thessalonians since Schmidt have determined that there is no significant difference between it and the authentic epistles.[51] For example, Mealand notes:

Discussion of Authorship of New Testament Documents" in Stanley E. Porter and D. A. Carson, ed., *Linguistics and the New Testament: Critical Junctures*, JSNTSup 5 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999): 206-255, 216-220.

[46] Anthony Kenny, *A Stylometric Study of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986).

[47] Ibid., 98.

[48] Ibid., 100.

[49] Schmidt, "Syntactical Style," 383-393.

[50] Ibid., 388. This, of course, only supports the pseudonymity argument if both Colossians and Ephesians are likewise ruled as pseudonymous. However, for the current study the majority position of pseudonymity for these two epistles will be followed.

[51] Kenneth J. Neumann, *The Authenticity of the Pauline Epistles in the Light of Stylostatistical Analysis*, SBLDS 120 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990); D. L. Mealand, "The Extent of the Pauline Corpus: A Multivariate Approach," *JSNT* 59 (1995): 61-92; Gerard Ledger, "An Exploration of Differences in the Pauline Epistles Using Multivariate Statistical Analysis," *LLC* 10 (1995): 85-97.

> While there is some slight evidence distinguishing Philippians and 1 and 2 Thessalonians from the major Paulines, this distinction is not sharp enough to be decisive. It may be worth recording that of these three letters it was 1 Thessalonians rather than 2 Thessalonians which seemed to be slightly more distant on the criteria used. When 2 Thessalonians was specifically subjected to discriminant analysis as a doubtful sample it was decisively classed with Paul.[52]

These contradictory studies show that even with computer analyses the problem of subjectivity remains, for results depend on what data is selected for analysis and how it is then interpreted. A more recent proposal has been to use the insight of sociolinguistics and adopt a register design model to explain differing styles; such a model "predicates a substantial degree of language change in response to social change so that significant co-textual variation can often be anticipated as the result of register rather than author variation."[53] In other words, different styles are not automatically the result of different authors; rather, the different audiences and authorial purposes must be taken into account and often cause drastic style differences.[54] There continues to be animated debate about the best approach to stylistic analyses and how to interpret the results.[55] These discussions all highlight the uncertain ground on which stylistic analysis operates.

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[52] Mealand, "Extent of Pauline Corpus," 86

[53] Pitts, "Style and Pseudonymity," 151.

[54] Jermo van Nes, *Pauline Language and the Pastoral Epistles: A Study of Linguistic Variation in the Corpus Paulinum*, Linguistic Biblical Studies 16 (Leiden: Brill, 2018) has likewise argued that stylistic variation can be accounted for by other factors besides author variation.

[55] As Stanley Porter notes in relation to authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, "Pauline Authorship and the Pastoral Epistles: Implications for Canon," *BBR* 5 (1995): 105-123, "The methods used to determine authorship are almost as varied as those scholars doing the calculations, with very little control on what criteria are being used and what would count as an adequate test of the method" (110).

Another issue for the discussion of style is Paul's use of secretaries.[56] Authors used secretaries in different ways in the ancient world. Cicero, for example, dictated essentially verbatim to his secretary Spintharus, but apparently his secretary Tiro took notes and presumably expanded upon these when writing the whole letter.[57] We do not have a clear picture of how much autonomy Paul's secretaries had, so he may have dictated word-by-word or he may have given general instructions about the topics to be covered. However, all examples of secretaries making significant stylistic changes come from the elite classes who used highly skilled secretaries. Furthermore, as Ehrman points out, all these examples of stylistic change are for short letters, not complicated theological treatises like Paul's letters, so there is no clear evidence that Paul had his secretaries put their own stamp on the letter.[58] On the other hand, the existence of co-authors has a greater possible impact on the style than any model of secretarial input can.[59] Since both 1 and 2 Thessalonians are sent by Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy it is possible that their composition was a team effort. Silvanus or Timothy may have even acted as a secretary, though, as Crüsemann notes, these two are more than secretaries, for "the moment the one dictating says 'we,' the one writing is no longer a mere assistant but has already been elevated, by that expression, to the level of an author."[60] It is probably impossible to know the full extent of input his co-authors had and what overall impact this has on the style of

[56] See E. Randolph Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, WUNT 2/42 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991).
[57] These practices are mentioned by Cicero, *Att*. 13.25.3; *Quint. fratr*. 3.1.19.
[58] Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery*, 219-220.
[59] See Crüsemann, *Pseudepigraphal Letters*, 91-93.
[60] Ibid., 92.

the letters, though their role as co-authors should caution us against the view that Paul's style should be identical in each letter. Yet again, determining differing style (as well as its significance) remains a subjective and fraught endeavour. While style proves to be an ultimately unhelpful category for determining authorship, the clear dependence of 2 Thessalonians upon the structure and themes of 1 Thessalonians is significant and demands a satisfactory explanation. This evidence must then be taken into account when reconstructing the *Sitz im Leben* of the letter.

The Authenticating Signature

There is one final piece of evidence regularly adduced by scholars in support of pseudonymity. In 2 Thess 3:17, the author adds a signature: Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου, ὅ ἐστιν σημεῖον ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ· οὕτως γράφω ("The greeting in my own hand, Paul. It is a sign in every letter. This is the way I write"). Many scholars have understood this as the author's attempt at authenticating his text, basing it on similar signatures in the Pauline corpus. The first phrase (Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου. "The greeting in my own hand, Paul") is identical to 1 Cor 16:21 and Col 4:18. There are also greetings in Gal 6:11 (Ἴδετε πηλίκοις ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρί; "See with what large letters I write to you in my own hand") and Phlm 19 (ἐγὼ Παῦλος ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρί; "I, Paul, write this in my own hand") which highlight the section where Paul's own handwriting would have been. These signatures were common in ancient letters, but the unique aspect of the signature in

2 Thess 3:17 is its attempt to verify Paul's authorship.[61] Because of this, it is claimed that the author "doth protest too much."[62] Interestingly, Paul's signatures in general were slightly unusual in his assertion that he writes in his own hand and draws his readers' attention to this fact.[63] Thus, one might argue that in all his letters Paul is "protesting too much." In fact, in Galatians Paul has the odd comment about how large his handwriting is. This is an unprecedented comment, not only in the Pauline letters, but among all ancient letters.[64] Other ancient writers occasionally comment on their own handwriting, but there is no other extant ancient letter in which an author purposefully draws attention to the style of his handwriting. The purpose of this comment in Galatians is unclear, but the most likely explanation is Paul wishes to assert his authority.[65] These references to writing in one's own hand are more common in legal letters and documents, as are subscriptions written in a larger hand, and they serve to authenticate the document.[66] The subscription of Galatians resembles subscriptions to ancient legal documents in that it summarises the details of the argument from the letter body. Thus, Reece hypothesises:

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[61] See Steve Reece, *Paul's Large Letters: Paul's Autographic Subscriptions in the Light of Ancient Epistolary Conventions*, LNTS 561 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), for a thorough treatment of ancient epistolary practice.

[62]This Shakespearean comment is repeated by Mitchell, "1 and 2 Thessalonians," 20; Collins, *Letters*, 223; Krentz, "Stone That Will Not Fit," 469; Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery*, 171.

[63] Reece, *Paul's Large Letters*, 108, 199.

[64] Ibid., 108, 202.

[65] Among the wide array of explanations offered for this comment, a common explanation is that Paul wished to emphasise the information following it. E.g. Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 314; Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 290; James D. G. Dunn, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, BNTC (London: Black, 1993), 334-335; Martyn, *Galatians*, 560. However, Reece, *Paul's Large Letters*, 104, has demonstrated "there is no evidence in any ancient epistolary tradition of special weight being attached to large handwriting."

[66] Reece, *Paul's Large Letters*, 199-201.

> This all conspires to suggest that, at the very least, Paul was aiming to add an official tenor to his letter to the Galatians. But, based on the historical evidence, we may perhaps dare to say more: namely that Paul wrote his subscription to the Galatians in large letters in his own hand, and he explicitly pointed out to the letter's recipients that he had done so, in order to offer strong and tangible proof that his letter was not a forgery, and to impress upon his audience that it was to be treated as though it had the authority of a legal document.[67]

If this is the case, then it is not only 2 Thessalonians that attempts to assert the author's authority in the signature.

If 2 Thessalonians is pseudonymous, one would presume the author knew of these other letters—or at least knew of 1 Corinthians, given the identical wording—if he feels able to claim it is Paul's pattern in all his letters. This scenario is possible as the similar prescripts could also be due to the author's knowledge of 1 Corinthians. However, as Jewett argues, if 2 Thessalonians is indeed a forgery then the authenticating statement in 3:17 "calls into question the authenticity of every Pauline letter not bearing the 'mark' of Paul's signature at the end. This would have been a highly risky method of supporting the acceptance of the forgery."[68] While it is likely that Paul added subscriptions in his own hand to every letter, this would only be obvious in the autographs.[69] Foster points out,

> If the putative pseudonymous author were consulting a Pauline letter collection around the beginning of the second century (if such a collection even existed at this point) this presumably would not have been formed from the autographs. Reading many of Paul's epistles, such as Romans, 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Ephesians and, indeed, 1 Thessalonians itself, it would not appear to be the case that Paul did make a sign in his own handwriting in every letter.[70]

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[67] Ibid., 201.
[68] Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 6.
[69] Reece, *Paul's Large Letters*, 198: "The comparative evidence would suggest, then, that Paul appended autographic subscriptions to all his letters, not just to those in which he explicitly states that he has done so.
[70] Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?" 166.

Furthermore, if the author was aware of other Pauline letters, including those that did not testify to a similar authenticating statement, we must ask how likely it would have been for him to engage in the risky strategy of claiming to follow a well-established Pauline pattern, especially since 1 Thessalonians does not include a similarly obvious signature. On the other hand, since these subscriptions were common epistolary practice, a pseudonymous author may have felt safe in making such a claim.

Connected with this issue is the author's statement in 2:2 about the false information about the day of the Lord possibly arising from a letter "as if by us." As discussed in chapter 2, this verse does not clearly suggest the author believes there is a forged letter, though that option remains open; the main point is that the author does not know precisely *how* the audience has been led into error, but the error should not be attributed to him.[71] In any case, the author at least imagines the possibility of a letter in Paul's name circulating among the community. Ehrman claims that "numerous ancient authors complained about forgeries—quite successful ones—circulating in their own names, even within their own lifetimes (not just forty years later)."[72] It is thus possible that not only were there letters forged in Paul's name in his lifetime, but further that 2 Thessalonians is a response to such letters, or at least to the possibility of them. In the case of a forged letter, it would not be at all surprising for Paul to assert his authority in a second letter. As Hill logically questions, "How else would the real author have approached such a misunderstanding?"[73] The signature of 2 Thess 3:17 does not require a pseudonymous

[71] Chapter 2, pp. 133-134.
[72] Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery*, 166.
[73] Judith L. Hill, "Establishing the Church in Thessalonica" (PhD diss., Duke University, 1990), 5.

author. If there was a false letter (or letters) circulating, claiming to be by Paul, then it makes sense for him to authoritatively mark a genuine letter in some such way. The signature does raise questions for any authorship theory, whether of authenticity or pseudonymity. On balance, though, it lends more support to authenticity. The fact that the signature in Galatians—another epistle concerned with authority and false teaching—also acts to authenticate the apostle's words is the strongest support for this argument.

TWO AUTHENTIC LETTERS

Since the authenticity of both letters was assumed until the 1800s, the arguments for authenticity tend to be refutations of the arguments made for pseudonymity. Thus, some scholars argue that the tensions observed by pseudonymity advocates simply do not exist or are at least highly exaggerated.[74] These arguments tend to be defensive rather than constructive, and most have been raised in the previous section so do not require further treatment. While some scholars argue that the literary parallels and observed differences between the two letters are not significant, others acknowledge that there are indeed significant differences between the two letters, but that these are better explained by different audiences than by different authors. Others have argued that the order of the letters should be reversed, which would relieve some of the perceived tensions between them. Finally, some scholars observe the extensive literary parallels but propose explanations such as Paul's (or a secretary's) use of a copy of 1 Thessalonians. Each of these suggestions will be examined in the current section.

[74] Best, *Thessalonians*, 50-54; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 31; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 357.

Different Audiences

In order to account for supposed differences—whether of theology, language, or tone—between the letters, some scholars have suggested that 1 and 2 Thessalonians were written to two different audiences. For example, Harnack notes the more obviously Jewish elements in the eschatological account of 2 Thessalonians and suggests this letter was written to a Jewish contingent in Thessalonica, whereas 1 Thessalonians was sent to a separate Thessalonian congregation of gentile believers.[75] Goguel suggests 2 Thessalonians was originally addressed to the Beroean church and is more Jewish because this community originated in Paul's synagogue work, according to Acts 17:10-15.[76] Schweizer hypothesises 2 Thessalonians may instead be a second letter to the Philippians, which Polycarp mentions.[77] Dibelius suggests that 1 Thessalonians was meant for the leaders of the congregation while 2 Thessalonians was written for a worship setting.[78] On the other hand, Ellis argues that 2 Thessalonians was the one addressed to the leaders while 1 Thessalonians was written for the whole congregation.[79]

While these theories are innovative suggestions, each one presumes that there are significant differences that can only be explained by different audiences. Yet, in response to Harnack, there is no evidence that Paul segregated his churches by ethnicity. The weakness of Goguel's suggestion of a Beroean audience is the lack of personal greetings in

[75] Adolf von Harnack, "Das Problem des 2. Thessalonicherbriefes," *SPAW* 31 (1910): 560-578.
[76] Maurice Goguel, *Introduction au Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Leroux, 1925), 4.1:335-337.
[77] Eduard Schweizer, "Der zweite Thessalonicherbrief ein Philipperbrief?" *TZ* 1 (1945): 90-105.
[78] Dibelius, *Thessalonicher*, 58.
[79] E. Earle Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, WUNT 18. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1978), 19-21.

2 Thessalonians, which one would expect from Paul in a standard letter to one of his communities. Schweizer's Philippian suggestion is certainly interesting, but again, the lack of personal greetings raises serious objections. Additionally, there are no clear similarities between the situations of Philippians and 2 Thessalonians, which would be expected if they had been written to the same community. If 2 Thessalonians is genuine, this is better explained by a letter that follows shortly upon 1 Thessalonians, in which all the greetings and personal information had already been communicated. Dibelius's argument does not make sense in light of 1 Thess 5:26 in which Paul commands that the letter be read out to the whole community. This instruction indicates that the leaders may have assumed the letter was just for them, and Paul wants to make sure that the whole congregation hears it. Additionally, the appeal to the congregation to respect the leaders who have authority over them (5:12) would be misplaced in a letter to those very leaders. Ellis's proposal is thus more plausible. However, Ellis suggests both letters were sent at the same time, which could cause issues in relation to the problem of the disorderly, for the two letters appear to give different advice.[80] In the first letter, the congregation is merely urged to admonish them, whereas the problem seems much more serious in 2 Thessalonians. It could be that the harsher punishment is to be carried out by the leaders, so the instructions in 1 Thessalonians do not need to be specific. Yet, it is more plausible to imagine a worsening situation as the cause for the author's harsher and more urgent tone regarding the disorderly in 2 Thessalonians.

[80] Cf. Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 23-24.

A more nuanced view of the two-audiences theory is offered by Malherbe, who believes that in 1 Thessalonians Paul writes to the whole community of believers in Thessalonica, but that copies of this first letter were emended with additional information with the result that one or more of the house churches received a copy which had information suggesting the day of the Lord had already come.[81] Paul thus writes 2 Thessalonians specifically to the misinformed group(s), arguing that the copy of 1 Thessalonians they have does not contain accurate information. Malherbe's theory depends upon an interpretation of 2 Thess 2:2 in which Paul refers to 1 Thessalonians rather than to a hypothetical pseudonymous letter, which as discussed in chapter 2 is a possibility. In this case, the signature in 2 Thess 3:17 would communicate to the groups that they did not possess the original copy. However, 2 Thess 2:2 leaves open a large amount of ambiguity—if Paul knew that the issue was caused by an altered copy of 1 Thessalonians, then why suggest that a prophecy or previous teaching might also be responsible for the error? Furthermore, the salutations in both letters are essentially the same, so the simplest solution is that the audience remains the same as well. Therefore, if both letters are authentic it is best to understand 1 and 2 Thessalonians as written to the same audience: the whole community of believers located in Thessalonica.

Reversed Order

Another possible solution to the perceived tensions between the two letters is to reverse their order. Manson, for example, argues 2 Thessalonians was written from Athens in 49 CE

[81] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 345-346.

and 1 Thessalonians was written the next year in Corinth.[82] There is, of course, no reason that the canonical order must represent the historical order, for the letters have been organised from longest to shortest. These scholars focus particularly on the persecution mentioned in the two letters, observing that in 2 Thess 1:4-7 it is spoken of as a present experience whereas in 1 Thessalonians (e.g., 2:14) it appears to be a past event.[83] However, 2 Thessalonians seems to reflect a situation of renewed or increased persecution; this would be likely in the case of the sporadic (rather than persistent) persecution in the earliest church communities. A second point in the argument is that the problem of the disorderly seems to be a new issue in 2 Thess 3:11-15, whereas 1 Thess 4:11-12/5:14 treats it as an old issue. The discussion in 2 Thessalonians about the disorderly is certainly more extensive than that of 1 Thessalonians, in which the community is simply exhorted to "to mind [their] own affairs, and to work with [their] hands" (4:11) and to admonish the disorderly (5:14). If 2 Thessalonians is first, then it would mean the problem had been dealt with sufficiently in 2 Thessalonians so that Paul only needed to give a quick reminder in 1 Thessalonians. However, an equally valid interpretation is that the disorderly were not a major problem when 1 Thessalonians was written whereas they have become a much bigger issue for the community once 2 Thessalonians is sent. The signature in 2 Thess 3:17-18 has suggested to some that it is the first Christian letter, yet this argument is inconclusive for it could equally well be a clarifying comment that informs the Thessalonians about Paul's common practice of which they were not aware. Additionally, the command in

[82] Thomas W. Manson, "St. Paul in Greece: The Letters to the Thessalonians," *BJRL* 35 (1953): 428-447. He is followed Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 37-45.
[83] Manson, "St. Paul in Greece," 438; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 42.

1 Thess 5:27 to read the letter out to the whole community would make sense in Paul's first letter to the community, which may not have known these letters were for everyone, not just the leaders. Furthermore, the fact that 1 Thessalonians does not make any reference to previous letters, but rather refers back to the founding mission as the last point of contact between Paul and the Thessalonians raises serious problems for the theory of reversed order. The evidence for 1 Thessalonians as the first letter remains the strongest, and so the canonical order is probably also the historical order.

The Relationship between 1 and 2 Thessalonians

Assuming 1 and 2 Thessalonians were written in the canonical order and both to the same audience, there are several explanations available for why they so closely resemble each other. For example, one argument that has been made is that 1 and 2 Thessalonians were written within weeks of each other, so the structure and language of 1 Thessalonians would have still been in Paul's head when he was writing 2 Thessalonians.[84] Nicholl understands the time to be even closer between the two, arguing that 2 Thessalonians arrived very shortly after 1 Thessalonians, acting as a sort of appendix. In his scenario, the report about the situation in the congregation was gathered before 1 Thessalonians was even delivered; thus, the problem underlying 2 Thessalonians had already developed before the first letter reached them.[85] This would resolve many of the issues of style. If the two were written so closely together, it would not be surprising for the structure to be similar, especially if

[84] For example, Frame, *Thessalonians*, 19 argues that five to seven weeks gives enough time for the situation to have worsened in Thessalonica after 1 Thessalonians had arrived.
[85] Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair*, 195.

2 Thessalonians is essentially an appendix to 1 Thessalonians. Furthermore, this would explain the lack of parallels in 2 Thess 2:1-12, for that is the section that responds to the new information Paul has received since sending 1 Thessalonians. Nicholl identifies the situational context of 1 and 2 Thessalonians as one in which the audience has lost their hope. This is certainly the case, as has been borne out in the exegesis—in both 1 and 2 Thessalonians the audience has lost some sort of hope in the *parousia*. In the first letter, they fear their deceased community members would miss out on it; in the second, they fear they themselves have now missed it. Yet, if in 2 Thessalonians Paul can imagine a letter circulating in his name, there would need to be enough time for this letter to have been composed and distributed and for the situation in Thessalonica to have grown severe enough to address so sharply. Therefore, it seems more likely that 2 Thessalonians was written at least a few weeks after 1 Thessalonians was delivered, if not a few months later. However, there does need to be a short time span between the two in order to account for the lack of personal greetings.

It is possible that Paul kept a copy of 1 Thessalonians and had it to hand while writing 2 Thessalonians; this could explain the literary dependence. The practice was certainly known among elite circles. Plutarch reports that Alexander the Great kept copies of letters that he had sent to officials.[86] Cicero suggests that he had copies of at least some of the letters he sent.[87] Campbell argues that retaining personal copies of letters "seems to have been such a common practice in the ancient world, especially in elite circles, that it

[86] *Eum.* 2.2-3.
[87] *Fam.* 7.25.1; *Att.* 3.9.3.

is almost entirely unremarked upon."[88] This argument from silence is suspect; such silence about this practice could equally well suggest it was not common and rather limited to the elite classes. However, Steve Reece has recently demonstrated that ancient scribes would routinely prepare two copies of a dictated letter: one for the sender and one for the recipient.[89] Reece found copies of letters (identified as such by their lack of greeting and signature) not only in elite circles but also among the papers of common people in Egypt and Vindolanda.[90] Thus, if Paul always made use of a scribe, it is likely that the scribe prepared two copies for him and that he—or one of his associates—kept them. This then becomes a viable solution for the literary dependence of 2 Thessalonians on 1 Thessalonians. Yet, if Paul had a copy of 1 Thessalonians, one wonders why the greeting and closing are not identical to 2 Thessalonians but rather contain minor additions, especially if the apostle wants to assure the community that this is a genuine letter. These copies, however, probably would not have had the greetings and closing signature and comments since those would only be included on letters that were actually sent, not on those intended for an archive.[91] This could explain why the opening and closing differ in

[88] Campbell, *Framing Paul*, 201.
[89] Reece, *Paul's Large Letters*, 212.
[90] Ibid., 211.
[91] Reece found copies of letters presumably archived by their senders from Vindolanda and Egypt (e.g., P.Oxy. 59.3993; P.Sarap. 87, 88, 89) that did not have greetings or signatures on them. He argues, "Comparative evidence suggests, then, that at least some of these epistolary features would have been left out of the copies of the letters that Paul retained for his own records" (212), and, "In sum, if Paul instructed his scribe to write two copies of his letter to the Galatians, as was the customary practice both among the elite letter-writers of antiquity (e.g., Alexander the Great, Cicero) and among commoners living on the periphery of the Roman Empire (e.g., Heliodoros on P.Sarap. 87, 88, and 89, Flavius Cerialis on Tab. Vindol. 225, 226), one to be sent to his congregations in Galatia, and the other to be retained in his own private archives, it seems likely that he would have included his autographic subscription—and made rather a fuss about it—only in the copy that he was actually sending" (213).

2 Thessalonians and resemble 1 Corinthians in several aspects. However, difficulties remain in explaining a parallel such as 1 Thess 3:11//2 Thess 2:16, in which the phrase is nearly identical except for the change in order of God and Jesus. If Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians using a copy of 1 Thessalonians, why would he have changed this phrase? On the other hand, a pseudonymous author working from a copy of 1 Thessalonians faces the same questions—why change some of these phrases but keep others verbatim? This mix of identical and altered phrases, then, causes the same problems for any theory that involves direct copying of 1 Thessalonians, whether by Paul or by a pseudonymous writer. Bailey argues that even if Paul had 1 Thessalonians with him and intentionally modelled 2 Thessalonians after it, "it is impossible to conceive of a man as creative as Paul drawing on his own previous letter in such an unimaginative way."[92] In reply to this purely speculative objection, if Paul was worried about a possible forgery circulating among the Thessalonians, it makes sense that he would try to stick to a similar structure as in his first letter. Whether the author is Paul or not, it seems that he did have 1 Thessalonians to hand, which best explains the literary parallels and similar structure of the two epistles.

SITZ IM LEBEN

While the authenticity of 1 Thessalonians should not be doubted, none of the above objections have categorically disproved or proved the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians. As the discussion has shown, the same data has been analysed time and again with conflicting results for the past two centuries. Ultimately, there must be a plausible *Sitz im Leben* in

[92] Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?" 136.

order to conclusively accept either authenticity or pseudonymity. The parallels between the two letters in structure and theme are so extensive that any conclusion on the question of authorship and historical setting must satisfactorily address that issue. Another factor that should weigh into the discussion is the apparent connection between 2 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians. Their prescripts include the same appellation, as do the signatures. Based on these literary parallels, a pseudonymous author would have to at least know 1 Corinthians if he is to be accused of incorporating Pauline elements in an attempt at authentication. Yet, the Corinthian correspondence also correlates with 1 Thessalonians. In fact, as mentioned above, this was one of the reasons Baur questioned the authenticity of 1 Thessalonians; he thought the author had borrowed elements from 1 and 2 Corinthians. Thus, both letters show a certain resonance with the Corinthian correspondence. This could support the theory that both letters were written in Corinth, but it could also just reflect common patterns in Paul's writing and speech. If the letter is pseudonymous, then the author may have noticed the similarities between 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians and so included elements from it in his own letter.

A plausible *Sitz im Leben* has historically been the weakness of arguments for pseudonymity. It is generally agreed that the letter, though addressed to the Thessalonians, did not originate in Thessalonica; rather, the author found topics in 1 Thessalonians that lined up well with what he wanted to address and so used it as a template. Beyond this initial agreement, though, scholars have greatly varied in their proposed historical reconstructions. Wrede, for example, suggests 2 Thessalonians was written at the end of

the first or beginning of the second century CE.[93] The situation Wrede proposes is one in which believers had possibly interpreted 1 Thess 5:1-11, along with their own prophecies and revelations, to mean that the *parousia* had already occurred.[94] Marxsen and Bailey both suggest the author writes to combat Gnostic thought similar to what is refuted in 2 Tim 2:17-18.[95] On the other hand, Trilling proposes a hypothetical setting for 2 Thessalonians in which the author, who he suggests was not part of the Pauline school, was responding to renewed apocalypticism, trying to dampen eschatological expectations.[96] Trilling argues that it is impossible to get a more specific date than sometime in the period between 80 CE to the early second century, during which time other letters like 2 Peter and 1 Clement also witness to a delay of the *parousia*.[97] Yet, the appeal to the authority of the Pauline tradition would suggest that the author is associated with the Pauline network. Thus, Boring argues that 2 Thessalonians is from the second or third generation of the Pauline school, written to Pauline churches in general to teach that the day of the Lord was not coming soon and how they should live in light of this.[98] Indeed, the most common *Sitz im Leben* suggested for 2 Thessalonians is that of a second or third generation Paulinist author writing to a general audience to combat realised eschatology through apocalyptic eschatology. For example, Frank Witt Hughes argues:

> I conclude that the author of 2 Thessalonians was outraged by the authoritative claims of his adversaries, as evidenced by their publishing ventures, which our author dismissed as forgeries, letters which St Paul never could have written. He

[93] Wrede, *Echtheit der zweiten Thessalonicher-briefs*, 114.
[94] Ibid., 67-69.
[95] Marxsen, *Introduction*, 39; Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?" 142.
[96] Trilling, *zweite Briefe*, 26-27.
[97] Ibid., 28.
[98] Boring, *Thessalonians*, 213-214.

> thus retreated into the oldest and most authoritative writing of the Apostle that he possessed, 1 Thessalonians. Using this old letter as a model, our author made a powerful and well-argued reply, full of apocalyptic fire and yet chillingly cold, but clearly a polished piece of religious rhetoric. Hence, in the face of what our author believed to be the extreme writings of his adversaries, with whom he had all too much in common, our author could not remain tolerably silent.[99]

According to Hughes, these adversaries are embodied in the pseudonymous letters of Colossians and Ephesians. The author of 2 Thessalonians is troubled by the realised eschatology of the Paulinists represented by these two letters and so presents an account to directly refute such thought.

Of the proposed theories for a pseudonymous 2 Thessalonians, these scenarios in which the author responds to other pseudonymous writings from the Pauline school are the most plausible. These interpretations explain 2 Thess 2:2 as a reference to a letter written in Paul's name—such as Colossians or Ephesians—which the pseudepigrapher wishes to refute by casting doubt on its authenticity. Though most of these scholars understand the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians as incompatible with each other, their reconstruction of the historical occasion does not require this. It could very well be that a pseudonymous author saw the parallels with the Synoptic eschatological discourse in 1 Thessalonians and found a solution to the problem he wished to address in that same text—the day of the Lord cannot have come already because certain signs had not yet occurred. However, it is unclear how precisely the arguments in 2 Thessalonians would correct views espoused in Colossians and Ephesians. The author's summary of the opposing position—"the day of the Lord has come"—is not an accurate description of the

[99] Hughes, *Early Christian Rhetoric*, 95. Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, likewise suggests the author is opposed to realised eschatology and teaches apocalyptic eschatology instead.

positions of Colossians and Ephesians. In the first place, the terms day of the Lord and *parousia* do not appear at all in either of these letters.[100] Furthermore, Col 3:4 and 2 Thess 1:7-12 have similar eschatological teachings:

Col 3:4	**2 Thess 1:7, 10, 12**
When Christ who is your life is revealed [φανερωθῇ],	when the Lord Jesus is revealed [ἀποκαλύψει] from heaven (1:7)
then you also will be revealed [φανερωθήσεσθε] with him in glory [δόξῃ]	when he comes to be glorified [ἐνδοξασθῆναι] in his saints (1:10)
	so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified [ἐνδοξασθῇ] in you, and you in him (1:12)

In both texts, the hope offered is that one day Jesus will be "revealed" and that on that day those who believe in him will be with him in glory. The terminology is not identical here—which would again suggest there is not a link between these two texts—but both texts claim there is still a future appearance of Jesus which is yet to happen. Furthermore, since a pseudonymous author of 2 Thessalonians must have been aware of 1 Corinthians, it is intriguing that he does not incorporate the eschatological teaching from it in this letter. To be sure, there is a final enemy which is yet to be defeated in both 1 Cor 15 and 2 Thess 2. However, in 1 Cor 15 that enemy is death, not a personal agent of Satan. Additionally, 2 Thessalonians suggests a situation in which people are disturbed by the claim "the day of the Lord has come," and—as highlighted in chapter 2—this is because there is a lost hope in the *parousia*, not because they think Jesus's return has been realised in some spiritual way. Thus, 2 Thessalonians should not be understood as a rebuke of realised eschatology

[100] As Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica*, 57n44 observes.

present in a pseudonymous letter like Colossians and Ephesians. Furthermore, in response to these arguments for the general nature of the epistle, proponents of authenticity have argued there is clearly a real, specific problem going on which the author wants to address, as seen in the problem of the disorderly. As Barclay argues, "in comparison with Ephesians, or even with the Pastorals, it appears to be closely tied to a specific situation."[101]

Another problem is how a second letter to the Thessalonians could have entered circulation without raising suspicion among the Thessalonians who had, or knew of, the original first letter. It, of course, could have gained popularity in other regions first and only come much later to Thessalonica, but it still is interesting that no one in Thessalonica objected to its appearance years after Paul's death. Proponents of pseudonymity argue this would have been the same case for any other pseudonymous letter, but as Malherbe observes, "[N]one of the other [pseudonymous] letters draws attention to the problem of letter writing the way 2 Thessalonians does. Furthermore, none of those letters is purportedly written to the same church to which a genuine one had already been written."[102] Thus, there are difficulties with even the most convincing *Sitz im Leben* for a pseudonymous 2 Thessalonians. The question then is whether a more plausible *Sitz im Leben* can be proposed for an authentic 2 Thessalonians.

All of those who argue for an authentic 2 Thessalonians also argue that it was written shortly after 1 Thessalonians. In this case, the Thessalonians were not dealing with new problems but rather with the increasingly serious problems first addressed in

[101] Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 526. Cf. Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica*, 58.
[102] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 373.

1 Thessalonians. This is one reason the structure of 2 Thessalonians so closely follows the first letter. Furthermore, if Paul imagined the possibility of a forged letter as responsible for the eschatological error in 2 Thessalonians, then it is not surprising he matches 2 Thessalonians closely to 1 Thessalonians and strongly asserts its authenticity in the signature. Most scholars thus provide a date of 50 or 51 CE for the composition of 1 Thessalonians and shortly thereafter for 2 Thessalonians, and Corinth is usually the suggested location. However, Douglas Campbell has recently argued that the two letters should be located nearly a decade earlier, following on the heels of the "Gaian crisis" in which Caligula attempted to have a statue of himself, portrayed as Jupiter, erected in the temple at Jerusalem.[103] For Campbell, this crisis of 39-40 CE is the historical background for 2 Thessalonians, and he argues that 2:3-12 reflects the events of this situation. As I argued in chapter 2, 2 Thess 2:1-12 is most significantly shaped by Dan 7-12. However, it is possible that Paul reinterpreted this material in light of the Gaian crisis. Campbell argues that while preceding Jewish reflection on eschatological temple violation focused on the desecration of the altar, 2 Thessalonians contributes a new focus on a figure who enthrones himself in the temple.[104] Because 2 Thessalonians refers to this material as something the author has already taught the audience, Campbell reasons that the founding mission to Thessalonica, in which this information would have been relayed, had to take place during or directly after the Gaian crisis.[105] He thus places the founding mission in 40 CE. Yet, as Campbell cautiously acknowledges, "The suitability of these questions to the immediate aftermath of

[103] Campbell, *Framing Paul*, 220-229.
[104] Ibid., 224
[105] Ibid., 225.

the Gaian crisis is not incontestable proof that 1 and 2 Thessalonians were composed then, but they certainly fit well with that period."[106]

There is nothing else in 1 or 2 Thessalonians that would necessitate a date in the 40s, so Campbell's dating depends on adjusting the typically accepted Pauline chronology. Yet, this adjustment in chronology depends largely on connecting the Thessalonian letters with the Gaian crisis, which ends up being a circular argument. I find it difficult to dispense with the traditional dating of the Thessalonian mission on this basis. Indeed, as Wright argues, "The Thessalonian letters, especially the second one, may well echo the Gaian crisis, but the insistence that they must date from that period, rather than referring back to it a decade or so later, rests on the flimsiest of arguments."[107] Furthermore, as argued in the previous chapter the eschatological material in 1 and 2 Thessalonians originates in an already extant eschatological discourse based on Dan 7-12, so though the Gaian crisis may have impacted how this tradition developed in different contexts, it is not necessary to imagine Paul is purposefully reflecting on that crisis nor that he created the discourse as the crisis unfolded. I am also not as convinced as Campbell that Acts must be left out of the discussion of Pauline chronology. Within 1 Thessalonians, the only information we receive is that at some point prior to the founding mission in Thessalonica, Paul, Timothy, and

[106] Ibid., 228.

[107] N. T. Wright, review of *Framing Paul: An Epistolary Biography*, by Douglas A. Campbell, *Theology* 119 (2016): 364-367, 366. Campbell himself admits, "Somewhat unfortunately for chronographers, the presence of this specific set of motifs within early Christian eschatological discourses in later texts, most notably in Mark and Matthew, suggests that the expectation of an analogous blasphemous defilement of the temple persisted long after Gaius's specific plan was halted. So we know only when these specific expectations entered the early church's eschatological discourse" (*Framing Paul*, 225).

Silvanus were in Philippi (1 Thess 2:2), and after having to leave suddenly (2:17-18) they ended up in Athens (3:1), with Paul (and Silvanus?) sending Timothy back to check on the community (3:2). In Acts, Timothy and Silas stay in Berea while Paul goes on to Athens (Acts 17:14-15). Paul then leaves from Athens for Corinth, and Acts dates his visit there sometime in 50-51 based on Gallio's proconsulship (18:12). The information in 1 Thessalonians does not line up perfectly, for in Acts both Silas and Timothy remain in Berea while Paul goes to Athens on his own and they only later join him in Corinth, but apart from that Paul's movements are the same. I do not see a good reason for Acts to move the dates forward by nearly a decade if the actual visits in Thessalonica and Corinth occurred in the early 40s. Though Campbell has offered an intriguing reappraisal of the dating of the Thessalonian correspondence, it is best to accept the consensus view of 50 or 51 CE.

If 2 Thessalonians is authentic it was written in 50 or 51 CE, several months after 1 Thessalonians was delivered, which itself was written several months after Paul had departed from Thessalonica. Corinth remains the most likely location for their composition, especially given the connections with the Corinthian correspondence. We still must answer the question of the situation that caused the author to write 2 Thessalonians. As determined in chapter 2, the claim is not that the day of the Lord is imminent, but that it has indeed come. This claim has not led to excitement among the majority of the community but instead to concern, as is obvious in 2 Thess 2:2. Therefore, any reconstruction must explain why many of the Thessalonians would be worried when

hearing that the day of the Lord had arrived. In response to these observations, Barclay has presented an intriguing *Sitz im Leben* for an authentic 2 Thessalonians:

> The Thessalonian Christians, bolstered in their eschatological beliefs by the reception of 1 Thessalonians, looked forward to their vindication when God's wrath would fall on those who presently harassed them. Such harassment continued (2 Thess 1:4-9), and it perhaps even intensified as some failed to heed Paul's instruction about keeping to their jobs and not provoking outsiders. In an atmosphere of feverish expectation, some Christians reacted to a local (or perhaps widespread) disaster by claiming that it manifested the wrath of God, in fact that it was the 'sudden destruction' which Paul had promised as marking 'the day of the Lord' (2:2). Such an announcement naturally caused turmoil among the small band of believers: some may have reacted with glee, others with dismay that their loved ones had not responded in time before the final judgment began to descend. The whole atmosphere was frenzied enough to encourage many who had given up their jobs to continue their urgent, full-time evangelism (3:6-13).[108]

I agree with Barclay that a local disaster was likely misidentified by some in the community as a sign that the day of the Lord had arrived. I would, however, argue that the concern present in the audience is not about loved ones who have not believed in time, but is rather about the nonarrival of the *parousia*; they are fearful that their own salvation will not be accomplished. The only place in the letter where the author, arguably, points to outsiders coming in is 2 Thess 2:13, where he speaks of the Thessalonians as chosen by God as "firstfruits of salvation." This verse may instead mean chosen "from the beginning," though most commentators opt for the "firstfruits" reading.[109] Barclay's explanation is possible on the first reading, yet this verse—whatever reading is decided—seems intended rather to bolster the believers' assurance in their own salvation than to provide comfort that there is still time for their loved ones to turn to God. This interpretation also requires that "the

[108] Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 528.

[109] απ αρχης appears in ℵ D K L; απαρχης is in B F G.

disorderly" refers to those who had stopped working in order to evangelise instead. However, I argued in chapter 2 that the issue of the disorderly is not related to the eschatological error and instead is about manual labourers in the community who have taken advantage of their more well-off brothers and sisters.

The best *Sitz im Leben* for a genuine 2 Thessalonians is a situation in which some members of the community had started teaching that the day of the Lord—an event separate from the *parousia*—had already come, due to an event which they saw as evidence of God's judgment on nonbelievers; their claim had greatly disturbed the majority of the community who could not understand why they were still suffering and why Jesus had not yet returned if the day of the Lord had already happened. This false belief could have been caused by a situation of heightened eschatological expectation among some of the community, perhaps encouraged by Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians to keep watch since the day of the Lord would come suddenly. While waiting with eager expectation, a disaster occurred which some took as signalling the arrival of the day of the Lord.[110] Paul is unsure where this report originated, imagining the possibility of a letter, prophecy or teaching attributed to him which made this claim. However, they forgot about other events that had not yet happened, so Paul has to remind them about the apostasy and the man of lawlessness, which he says he taught while he was with them. These themes belong to the same eschatological tradition that is represented in the Synoptic eschatological discourse, and Paul alludes to this tradition in 2 Thess 2:15. Furthermore, it is clear from

[110] As discussed in chapter 2, Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," 527-538 notes that Tacitus had considered 51-52 CE particularly bad years of earthquakes and famines. This could indicate the sort of situation in Thessalonica, but it must remain speculative.

2 Thessalonians that two situations had worsened for the Thessalonians since the first letter: persecution had increased, without relief in sight, and the disorderly in the congregation were continuing to cause issues. Paul addresses these concerns with stronger words than in the first letter, hoping, in the first case, to encourage the Thessalonians to persevere, and in the second case, to definitively resolve the issue of the disorderly in the congregation.

CONCLUSION

Though the authenticity of the Thessalonian correspondence was not questioned until the nineteenth century, the debate since has been heated and varied. Despite occasional objections, the authenticity of 1 Thessalonians should be upheld; no plausible *Sitz im Leben* can be suggested for a pseudonymous 1 Thessalonians. On the other hand, it is no surprise that the debate over the authorship of 2 Thessalonians remains at a stalemate. The arguments usually adduced in support of either theory generally come down to subjective decisions, and more often than not the evidence is interpreted in a way that confirms the scholar's presuppositions. This is the case throughout the history of this issue. Thus, though all the aspects of the argument are important, the most plausible *Sitz im Leben* ultimately decides the issue.

As discussed above, the most common *Sitz im Leben* proposed for a pseudonymous 2 Thessalonians is a general letter to believers defending Pauline eschatology against what the author(s) regard as the heretical teaching of a supposed pseudonymous letter like Colossians or Ephesians. However, the arguments made in 2 Thessalonians do not seem to be an adequate response to the claims made in either of those letters. Furthermore, given

the specific problems presumed in 2 Thessalonians, it is best to understand it as a letter addressed to a particular circumstance. Therefore, it is best to take 2 Thessalonians as a genuine letter of Paul (and Silvanus and Timothy), written to a congregation they had only been with briefly that was struggling to grasp all the aspects of eschatology which the missionaries had first taught them and that was suffering from both external persecution and internal disorder.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, my goal has been to examine and compare the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians without first deciding on authorship for either letter. In chapter 1, I produced an exegesis of the passages of 1 Thessalonians that contained eschatological material: 1:9-10, 2:13-16, 2:19-20, 3:13, 4:13-18, 5:1-11, and 5:23-24. A benefit of leaving authorship to the side in the first analysis is the ability to notice certain unique features of this letter. One such feature is the author's use of *parousia* for the specific act of the return of Jesus and its effect on believers and "day of the Lord" for the coming of God's wrath upon unbelievers. In all other letters, Paul clearly identifies the day of the Lord as the day of Jesus, perhaps because of the confusion his use in 1 Thessalonians caused. Another feature is the lack of a formal judgment scene, even though judgment is implicit in several of the passages. Whereas in 2 Corinthians and Romans there are specific references to the judgment seat of Christ or God, that is not the case in this letter. Chapter 2 followed the same structure as the first chapter, and I treated the eschatological passages in 2 Thessalonians: 1:5-12 and 2:1-12. I also included 3:6-15, as it is often understood to be connected to the eschatological problem, though I determined that the problem addressed in this passage does not appear to be linked to the eschatological error addressed in 2:2. A distinctive feature of this letter is the theme of eschatological reversal: those who currently suffer will be vindicated, while those who persecute them will be destroyed. God's punishment is thus a large part of the picture in this letter, offering comfort to the suffering community and assurance that things will change when Jesus returns.

In chapter 3, I focused on the act of comparison and discussed how we might more effectively compare an undisputed and disputed letter of Paul by considering each letter on its own merits before comparing it with the other. In following this method, I took the conclusions about eschatology in 1 and 2 Thessalonians reached in the first two chapters and compared them with each other. While there were certain differences noted between the two eschatologies, these were best explained as due to the different situations of the audience rather than to fundamental theological difference between the two letters. Therefore, the result of this comparison was an assertion of the two accounts' compatibility with each other.

In chapter 4, the two accounts were further shown to be compatible because they are based on the same pre-synoptic tradition that is reflected in the Synoptic eschatological discourse of Mark 13, Matt 24, and Luke 21. I concluded that either Paul drew on the same tradition also found in the Synoptic discourse, or if not by Paul, the author of 2 Thessalonians intentionally incorporated material from Daniel to strengthen the parallels between the Thessalonian correspondence and the Synoptic Gospels. In either case, the result of chapters 3 and 4 is the overwhelming conclusion that the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians are indeed compatible. Just as the Synoptic authors could hold together the sudden arrival of the son of man with clear signs of the events preceding his coming, so 1 and 2 Thessalonians together reflect that tension of suddenness and signs. Notably, in both cases it is believers who will be warned by signs in advance of that sudden day.

In the final chapter, I turned to a reconsideration of critical introduction issues for 1 and 2 Thessalonians. I reconsidered the various possible scenarios of authorship and the relationship of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Ultimately, the decision came down to the most plausible *Sitz im Leben*. Over the course of this analysis I determined that 1 and 2 Thessalonians are both best understood as genuine letters of Paul written in 50-51 CE, with 2 Thessalonians sent several months after the first letter. The various threads can now be drawn together. The situation of 1 and 2 Thessalonians is as follows: Paul's missionary visit to Thessalonica was much shorter than anticipated, but despite its brief duration there was a significant response to the gospel message among gentiles in the city who had stopped worshipping their idols and instead awaited their new Lord Jesus. In this founding visit, Paul communicated a new eschatological framework in which the community was to live—waiting for Jesus's return from heaven; in communicating this framework, Paul made use of an eschatological discourse similar to what we find in the Synoptic Gospels. This is the tradition he refers back to in 1 Thess 4:15 and 2 Thess 2:15. The missionaries are forced to leave Thessalonica earlier than planned, leading to confusion in the community over how all the different aspects of eschatology fit together. After this departure, deaths in the community caused further confusion for the Thessalonians, as they believed that somehow their dead community members would miss out on being united with the Lord in his *parousia*. Paul thus writes 1 Thessalonians to clarify what will happen when Jesus comes, with the dead raised first and then both the living and the resurrected caught up together to be with Jesus. Thus, the dead will by no means miss out on this event. However, Paul also urges the believers to live presently in light of this future event, making sure they live

morally pure lives distinct from those outside the community so that they can stand before God when that day comes and thus escape God's wrath.

A number of months after sending 1 Thessalonians, Paul receives a report that there is still eschatological confusion in the community, for somehow a false teaching attributed to Paul has circulated claiming that the day of the Lord has come. The best explanation for this confusion is that the Thessalonians misunderstood Paul's earlier teaching (whether his oral teaching in the founding mission or what he wrote in 1 Thessalonians) to mean that the day of the Lord was a day of wrath separate from the *parousia*. Some among the Thessalonians misinterpret a disaster (possibly an earthquake or famine) to be evidence that God's wrath has arrived. This misinterpretation may have been supported by reference to 1 Thess 2:16 in which a particular past event was evidence of the arrival of God's wrath on a certain group of Jews. However, though the day of the Lord has supposedly arrived, the community's suffering has only increased and there is no sign of Jesus's return. Thus, the Thessalonians worry that they themselves have missed out on rescue. Paul writes 2 Thessalonians to strongly refute this error, reminding them of his previous teaching on the events that must happen before the day of the Lord can come. He also combines the day of the Lord and the *parousia*, showing the Thessalonians that their glorification and their enemies' destruction will occur at the same moment, once the Lord returns, and he assures them that they will be vindicated on that day.

The different eschatological emphases of the two letters are best explained by these two different situations within the community. In writing 1 Thessalonians, Paul wished to encourage the Thessalonians to remain prepared for the day of the Lord, and so

he emphasised its suddenness for those who did not keep watch, drawing on the traditional material of the thief and the need for vigilance. On the other hand, in 2 Thessalonians he had to remind the Thessalonians that there were still events yet to occur before that day would come, so they should not rush to interpret every event as a sign that the day of the Lord had arrived. Thus, together 1 and 2 Thessalonians represent the two sides of a traditional eschatological discourse: suddenness and signs are held together in tension.

The most significant contribution of this research is a comparison of the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians that is not influenced by presuppositions of authorship for either letter. This has not been attempted by any other scholar, to my knowledge. Instead, in discussions about these two letters, there is generally a brief, perfunctory treatment of the two, usually in the service of quickly establishing either authenticity or pseudonymity before moving to interpretation. The result of this comparison is that the eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians—while not identical in every respect—are compatible. This finding has significant implications for the historical situations of both 1 and 2 Thessalonians and their place within Pauline theology.

If this argument has succeeded, then it is necessary to take stock of Pauline theology as it is currently articulated. The focus has often revolved around the topics of justification and Paul's attitude to the law, generally taking cues from the material in Romans and Galatians and essentially ignoring the Thessalonian correspondence. Yet, the fact that these two topics are wholly absent in the Thessalonian correspondence suggests they are not Paul's central—or at least not his only central—concern. Benjamin Edsall has helpfully drawn out this point in examining the "formative instruction" at Thessalonica and

Corinth.[1] His outline of formative teaching in Thessalonica would be aided by including data from 2 Thessalonians, which would further support his conclusion that Paul imparted to his communities a "symbolic universe … deeply rooted within Judaism."[2] In both 1 and 2 Thessalonians we see a community struggling to fully comprehend the multiple aspects of this symbolic universe. This all suggests that eschatology is a much larger part of the picture than has often been represented in Pauline theology.[3] Furthermore, though 1 Thessalonians is often treated as a starting point for Pauline eschatology, 2 Thessalonians, due to its disputed status, is regularly ignored. However, if I am correct that 2 Thessalonians is indeed by Paul, then it must be considered alongside the rest of the letters. For example, while the "apocalyptic Paul" school has taken more seriously the eschatological and apocalyptic elements of Paul's letters, it is fascinating that 2 Thessalonians—and indeed 1 Thessalonians as well—has had little impact on these discussions. I suggest that 1 and 2 Thessalonians would contribute significantly to better understanding the shape of Paul's apocalyptic thought and could correct some of the errors into which those in the apocalyptic Paul school have fallen.[4] The increasing recognition of apocalyptic thought in Paul's letters should also make room for the contribution of both 1 and 2 Thessalonians.[5]

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[1] Benjamin A. Edsall, *Paul's Witness to Formative Early Christian Instruction*, WUNT 2/365 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

[2] Ibid., 224.

[3] Paula Fredriksen argues this point in *Paul: The Pagans' Apostle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), showing how Paul's eschatological thought motivated his ministry, though she considers 2 Thessalonians a pseudonymous letter that deals with the "delay" of the *parousia* (169).

[4] For a brief overview of these problems, see pp. 8-10 above. Cf. Davies, *Paul Among the Apocalypses*?

[5] Cf. Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?" 152: "Given the centrality of apocalyptic thought within 2 Thessalonians, the letter, if authentic, may have much to contribute to understanding a central facet of Paul's thought, and moreover it might provide important resources for better appreciating the development and formulation of his theology."

One potentially fruitful area for further investigation would be a taxonomy of spiritual forces in Paul's letters. In 2 Thess 2 the eschatological opponent is portrayed as a human figure, though he is an agent of Satan. On the other hand, in 1 Cor 15:26 the final enemy is death—but is this death personified or death as an actual entity? Is the man of lawlessness the final enemy, or is death? How are they connected with the ἀρχαί and δυνάμεις of 1 Cor 15:24 and Rom 8:38, the στοιχεῖαι of Gal 4, the ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου of 1 Cor 2:6-8, the δαιμονίοι of 1 Cor 10:20-21, and the θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου of 2 Cor 4:4? How are these figures related to Satan? And what role do angels play in all this? Related to these questions, there are certain aspects of Paul's theology in 1 Corinthians and Romans that have more recently been understood as influenced by Daniel (chapter 7 in particular), which is significant considering the key influence of Dan 7-12 on the Thessalonian correspondence.[6] Identifying further how Paul's eschatology has been shaped by Daniel would be a significant contribution to our understanding of his thought and how—or indeed whether or not—it developed over the course of his ministry. In summary, including 2 Thessalonians in any consideration of Pauline eschatology opens many fruitful avenues for further research, and by bringing both 1 and 2 Thessalonians into discussions of Pauline theology we can more fully grasp the vision of the apostle who taught his communities to wait in hopeful expectation and preparedness for the triumphal appearance of their Lord.

[6] On Dan 7, 1 Cor 15, and Rom 8, see Matthew V. Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 144. Cf. J. Thomas Hewitt and Matthew V. Novenson, "Participationism and Messiah Christology in Paul," in *God and the Faithfulness of Paul*, ed. Heilig, Hewitt, and Bird, 393-415, who argue, "Paul has woven into his messianism a notion of participation derived from Dan 7" (409).

APPENDIX: THE SYNOPTIC ESCHATOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

Matthew
Mark
Luke
Matthew + Mark
Matthew + Luke
Mark + Luke
Matthew + Mark + Luke

Matthew 24	**Mark 13**	**Luke 21** [+ **chs 12 & 17**]
[1]Καὶ ἐξελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἐπορεύετο, καὶ προσῆλθον οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπιδεῖξαι αὐτῷ τὰς οἰκοδομὰς τοῦ ἱεροῦ. 2ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· οὐ βλέπετε ταῦτα πάντα; ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῇ ὧδε λίθος ἐπὶ λίθον ὃς οὐ καταλυθήσεται. [3]Καθημένου δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρους τῶν ἐλαιῶν προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ κατ' ἰδίαν λέγοντες· εἰπὲ ἡμῖν, πότε ταῦτα ἔσται καὶ τί τὸ σημεῖον τῆς σῆς παρουσίας καὶ συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος; [4]Καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· βλέπετε μή τις ὑμᾶς πλανήσῃ· [5]πολλοὶ γὰρ ἐλεύσονται ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου λέγοντες· ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ χριστός, καὶ πολλοὺς πλανήσουσιν. [6]μελλήσετε δὲ ἀκούειν πολέμους καὶ ἀκοὰς πολέμων· ὁρᾶτε μὴ θροεῖσθε· δεῖ γὰρ γενέσθαι, ἀλλ' οὔπω ἐστὶν τὸ	[1]Καὶ ἐκπορευομένου αὐτοῦ ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ λέγει αὐτῷ εἷς τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ· διδάσκαλε, ἴδε ποταποὶ λίθοι καὶ ποταπαὶ οἰκοδομαί. [2]καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ· βλέπεις ταύτας τὰς μεγάλας οἰκοδομάς; οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῇ ὧδε λίθος ἐπὶ λίθον ὃς οὐ μὴ καταλυθῇ. [3]Καὶ καθημένου αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν ἐλαιῶν κατέναντι τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἐπηρώτα αὐτὸν κατ' ἰδίαν Πέτρος καὶ Ἰάκωβος καὶ Ἰωάννης καὶ Ἀνδρέας· [4]εἰπὸν ἡμῖν, πότε ταῦτα ἔσται καὶ τί τὸ σημεῖον ὅταν μέλλῃ ταῦτα συντελεῖσθαι πάντα; [5]Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἤρξατο λέγειν αὐτοῖς· βλέπετε μή τις ὑμᾶς πλανήσῃ· [6]πολλοὶ ἐλεύσονται ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου λέγοντες ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι, καὶ πολλοὺς πλανήσουσιν. [7]ὅταν δὲ ἀκούσητε πολέμους καὶ ἀκοὰς πολέμων, μὴ θροεῖσθε· δεῖ γενέσθαι, ἀλλ' οὔπω τὸ	[5]Καί τινων λεγόντων περὶ τοῦ ἱεροῦ ὅτι λίθοις καλοῖς καὶ ἀναθήμασιν κεκόσμηται εἶπεν· [6]ταῦτα ἃ θεωρεῖτε ἐλεύσονται ἡμέραι ἐν αἷς οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται λίθος ἐπὶ λίθῳ ὃς οὐ καταλυθήσεται. [7]Ἐπηρώτησαν δὲ αὐτὸν λέγοντες· διδάσκαλε, πότε οὖν ταῦτα ἔσται καὶ τί τὸ σημεῖον ὅταν μέλλῃ ταῦτα γίνεσθαι; [8]ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· βλέπετε μὴ πλανηθῆτε· πολλοὶ γὰρ ἐλεύσονται ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου λέγοντες· ἐγώ εἰμι, καί· ὁ καιρὸς ἤγγικεν. μὴ πορευθῆτε ὀπίσω αὐτῶν. [9]ὅταν δὲ ἀκούσητε πολέμους καὶ ἀκαταστασίας, μὴ πτοηθῆτε· δεῖ γὰρ ταῦτα γενέσθαι πρῶτον, ἀλλ' οὐκ εὐθέως τὸ

τέλος. [7]ἐγερθήσεται γὰρ ἔθνος ἐπὶ ἔθνος καὶ βασιλεία ἐπὶ βασιλείαν καὶ ἔσονται λιμοὶ καὶ σεισμοὶ κατὰ τόπους· [8]πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων. [9]Τότε παραδώσουσιν ὑμᾶς εἰς θλῖψιν καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσιν ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἔσεσθε μισούμενοι ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου. [10]καὶ τότε σκανδαλισθήσονται πολλοὶ καὶ ἀλλήλους παραδώσουσιν καὶ μισήσουσιν ἀλλήλους· [11]καὶ πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφῆται ἐγερθήσονται καὶ πλανήσουσιν πολλούς· [12]καὶ διὰ τὸ πληθυνθῆναι τὴν	τέλος. [8]ἐγερθήσεται γὰρ ἔθνος ἐπ᾽ ἔθνος καὶ βασιλεία ἐπὶ βασιλείαν, ἔσονται σεισμοὶ κατὰ τόπους, ἔσονται λιμοί· ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων ταῦτα. [9]Βλέπετε δὲ ὑμεῖς ἑαυτούς· παραδώσουσιν ὑμᾶς εἰς συνέδρια καὶ εἰς συναγωγὰς δαρήσεσθε καὶ ἐπὶ ἡγεμόνων καὶ βασιλέων σταθήσεσθε ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς. [10]καὶ εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη πρῶτον δεῖ κηρυχθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. [11]καὶ ὅταν ἄγωσιν ὑμᾶς παραδιδόντες, μὴ προμεριμνᾶτε τί λαλήσητε, ἀλλ᾽ ὃ ἐὰν δοθῇ ὑμῖν ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ τοῦτο λαλεῖτε· οὐ γάρ ἐστε ὑμεῖς οἱ λαλοῦντες ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον.[12]Καὶ παραδώσει ἀδελφὸς ἀδελφὸν εἰς θάνατον καὶ πατὴρ τέκνον, καὶ ἐπαναστήσονται τέκνα ἐπὶ γονεῖς καὶ θανατώσουσιν αὐτούς· [13]καὶ ἔσεσθε μισούμενοι ὑπὸ πάντων διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου.	τέλος. [10]Τότε ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· ἐγερθήσεται ἔθνος ἐπ᾽ ἔθνος καὶ βασιλεία ἐπὶ βασιλείαν, [11]σεισμοί τε μεγάλοι καὶ κατὰ τόπους λιμοὶ καὶ λοιμοὶ ἔσονται, φόβητρά τε καὶ ἀπ᾽ οὐρανοῦ σημεῖα μεγάλα ἔσται. [12]Πρὸ δὲ τούτων πάντων ἐπιβαλοῦσιν ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῶν καὶ διώξουσιν, παραδιδόντες εἰς τὰς συναγωγὰς καὶ φυλακάς, ἀπαγομένους ἐπὶ βασιλεῖς καὶ ἡγεμόνας ἕνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός μου· [13]ἀποβήσεται ὑμῖν εἰς μαρτύριον. [14]θέτε οὖν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν μὴ προμελετᾶν ἀπολογηθῆναι· [15]ἐγὼ γὰρ δώσω ὑμῖν στόμα καὶ σοφίαν ᾗ οὐ δυνήσονται ἀντιστῆναι ἢ ἀντειπεῖν ἅπαντες οἱ ἀντικείμενοι ὑμῖν. [16]παραδοθήσεσθε δὲ καὶ ὑπὸ γονέων καὶ ἀδελφῶν καὶ συγγενῶν καὶ φίλων, καὶ θανατώσουσιν ἐξ ὑμῶν, [17]καὶ ἔσεσθε μισούμενοι ὑπὸ πάντων διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου. [18]καὶ θρὶξ ἐκ τῆς κεφαλῆς ὑμῶν οὐ μὴ ἀπόληται. [19]ἐν τῇ ὑπομονῇ ὑμῶν κτήσασθε τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν.

ἀνομίαν ψυγήσεται ἡ ἀγάπη τῶν πολλῶν.		
[13]ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας εἰς τέλος οὗτος σωθήσεται. [13]καὶ κηρυχθήσεται τοῦτο τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ εἰς μαρτύριον πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καὶ τότε ἥξει τὸ τέλος.	ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας εἰς τέλος οὗτος σωθήσεται.	
[15]Ὅταν οὖν ἴδητε	[14]Ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε	[20]Ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε κυκλουμένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδων Ἰερουσαλήμ, τότε γνῶτε ὅτι ἤγγικεν ἡ ἐρήμωσις αὐτῆς.
τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Δανιὴλ τοῦ προφήτου ἑστὸς ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ, ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοείτω,	τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως ἑστηκότα ὅπου οὐ δεῖ, ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοείτω,	
[16]τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη,	τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη,	[21]τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη

		[[Luke 17:31]] ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ὃς ἔσται ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος καὶ τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ,
[17]ὁ ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος	[15]ὁ [δὲ] ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος	
μὴ καταβάτω ἆραι τὰ ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας αὐτοῦ,	μὴ καταβάτω μηδὲ εἰσελθάτω ἆραί τι ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας αὐτοῦ,	μὴ καταβάτω ἆραι αὐτά,
[18]καὶ ὁ ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ μὴ ἐπιστρεψάτω ὀπίσω ἆραι τὸ ἱμάτιον αὐτοῦ.	[16]καὶ ὁ εἰς τὸν ἀγρὸν μὴ ἐπιστρεψάτω εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω ἆραι τὸ ἱμάτιον αὐτοῦ.	καὶ ὁ ἐν ἀγρῷ ὁμοίως μὴ ἐπιστρεψάτω εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω.

		καὶ οἱ ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῆς ἐκχωρείτωσαν καὶ οἱ ἐν ταῖς χώραις μὴ εἰσερχέσθωσαν εἰς αὐτήν, [22]ὅτι ἡμέραι ἐκδικήσεως αὗταί εἰσιν τοῦ πλησθῆναι πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα.
[19]ὀναὶ δὲ ταῖς ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσαις καὶ ταῖς θηλαζούσαις ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις. [20]προσεύχεσθε δὲ ἵνα μὴ γένηται ἡ φυγὴ ὑμῶν	[17]οὐαὶ δὲ ταῖς ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσαις καὶ ταῖς θηλαζούσαις ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις. [18]προσεύχεσθε δὲ ἵνα μὴ γένηται	[23]οὐαὶ ταῖς ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσαις καὶ ταῖς θηλαζούσαις ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις·

χειμῶνος μηδὲ σαββάτῳ. [21]ἔσται γὰρ τότε θλῖψις μεγάλη οἵα οὐ γέγονεν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κόσμου ἕως τοῦ νῦν οὐδ' οὐ μὴ γένηται. [22]καὶ εἰ μὴ ἐκολοβώθησαν αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι, οὐκ ἂν ἐσώθη πᾶσα σάρξ· διὰ δὲ τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς κολοβωθήσονται αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι. [23]Τότε ἐάν τις ὑμῖν εἴπῃ· ἰδοὺ ὧδε ὁ χριστός, ἢ· ὧδε, μὴ πιστεύσητε· [24]ἐγερθήσονται γὰρ ψευδόχριστοι καὶ ψευδοπροφῆται καὶ δώσουσιν σημεῖα μεγάλα καὶ τέρατα ὥστε πλανῆσαι, εἰ δυνατόν, καὶ τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς. [25]ἰδοὺ προείρηκα ὑμῖν. [26]ἐὰν οὖν εἴπωσιν ὑμῖν· ἰδοὺ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ἐστίν, μὴ ἐξέλθητε· ἰδοὺ ἐν τοῖς ταμείοις, μὴ πιστεύσητε· [27]ὥσπερ γὰρ ἡ ἀστραπὴ ἐξέρχεται ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ φαίνεται ἕως δυσμῶν, οὕτως ἔσται ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου· [28]ὅπου ἐὰν ᾖ τὸ πτῶμα, ἐκεῖ συναχθήσονται οἱ ἀετοί. [29]Εὐθέως δὲ μετὰ τὴν θλῖψιν τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκείνων ὁ ἥλιος σκοτισθήσεται, καὶ ἡ σελήνη οὐ δώσει τὸ φέγγος αὐτῆς, καὶ οἱ ἀστέρες πεσοῦνται ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν σαλευθήσονται. [30]καὶ τότε φανήσεται τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ	χειμῶνος· [19]ἔσονται γὰρ αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι θλῖψις οἵα οὐ γέγονεν τοιαύτη ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κτίσεως ἣν ἔκτισεν ὁ θεὸς ἕως τοῦ νῦν καὶ οὐ μὴ γένηται. [20]καὶ εἰ μὴ ἐκολόβωσεν κύριος τὰς ἡμέρας, οὐκ ἂν ἐσώθη πᾶσα σάρξ· ἀλλὰ διὰ τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς οὓς ἐξελέξατο ἐκολόβωσεν τὰς ἡμέρας. [21]Καὶ τότε ἐάν τις ὑμῖν εἴπῃ· ἴδε ὧδε ὁ χριστός, ἴδε ἐκεῖ, μὴ πιστεύετε· [22]ἐγερθήσονται γὰρ ψευδόχριστοι καὶ ψευδοπροφῆται καὶ δώσουσιν σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα πρὸς τὸ ἀποπλανᾶν, εἰ δυνατόν, τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς. [23]ὑμεῖς δὲ βλέπετε· προείρηκα ὑμῖν πάντα. [24]Ἀλλ' ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις μετὰ τὴν θλῖψιν ἐκείνην ὁ ἥλιος σκοτισθήσεται, καὶ ἡ σελήνη οὐ δώσει τὸ φέγγος αὐτῆς, [25]καὶ οἱ ἀστέρες ἔσονται ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πίπτοντες, καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς σαλευθήσονται.	ἔσται γὰρ ἀνάγκη μεγάλη ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὀργὴ τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ, [24]καὶ πεσοῦνται στόματι μαχαίρης καὶ αἰχμαλωτισθήσονται εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πάντα, καὶ Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἔσται πατουμένη ὑπὸ ἐθνῶν, ἄχρι οὗ πληρωθῶσιν καιροὶ ἐθνῶν.

ἀνθρώπου ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ τότε κόψονται πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς· [31]καὶ ἀποστελεῖ τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ μετὰ σάλπιγγος μεγάλης, καὶ ἐπισυνάξουσιν τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων ἀπ᾽ ἄκρων οὐρανῶν ἕως [τῶν] ἄκρων αὐτῶν. [32]Ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς συκῆς μάθετε τὴν παραβολήν· ὅταν ἤδη ὁ κλάδος αὐτῆς γένηται ἁπαλὸς καὶ τὰ φύλλα ἐκφύῃ, γινώσκετε ὅτι ἐγγὺς τὸ θέρος· [33]οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς, ὅταν ἴδητε πάντα ταῦτα, γινώσκετε ὅτι ἐγγύς ἐστιν ἐπὶ θύραις. [34]ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη ἕως ἂν πάντα ταῦτα γένηται. [35]ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ παρελεύσεται, οἱ δὲ λόγοι μου οὐ μὴ παρέλθωσιν. [36]Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης καὶ ὥρας οὐδεὶς οἶδεν, οὐδὲ οἱ ἄγγελοι τῶν οὐρανῶν οὐδὲ ὁ υἱός, εἰ μὴ ὁ πατὴρ μόνος.	[26]καὶ τότε ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐν νεφέλαις μετὰ δυνάμεως πολλῆς καὶ δόξης. [27]καὶ τότε ἀποστελεῖ τοὺς ἀγγέλους καὶ ἐπισυνάξει τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς [αὐτοῦ] ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων ἀπ᾽ ἄκρου γῆς ἕως ἄκρου οὐρανοῦ. [28]Ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς συκῆς μάθετε τὴν παραβολήν· ὅταν ἤδη ὁ κλάδος αὐτῆς ἁπαλὸς γένηται καὶ ἐκφύῃ τὰ φύλλα, γινώσκετε ὅτι ἐγγὺς τὸ θέρος ἐστίν· [29]οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς, ὅταν ἴδητε ταῦτα γινόμενα, γινώσκετε ὅτι ἐγγύς ἐστιν ἐπὶ θύραις. [30]Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη μέχρις οὗ ταῦτα πάντα γένηται. [31]ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ παρελεύσονται, οἱ δὲ λόγοι μου οὐ μὴ παρελεύσονται. [32]Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ἢ τῆς ὥρας οὐδεὶς οἶδεν, οὐδὲ οἱ ἄγγελοι ἐν οὐρανῷ οὐδὲ ὁ υἱός, εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ. [33]Βλέπετε, ἀγρυπνεῖτε· οὐκ οἴδατε γὰρ πότε ὁ καιρός ἐστιν. [34]Ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἀπόδημος ἀφεὶς τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ δοὺς τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἑκάστῳ τὸ ἔργον	[27]καὶ τότε ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐν νεφέλῃ μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς. [28]ἀρχομένων δὲ τούτων γίνεσθαι ἀνακύψατε καὶ ἐπάρατε τὰς κεφαλὰς ὑμῶν, διότι ἐγγίζει ἡ ἀπολύτρωσις ὑμῶν. [29]Καὶ εἶπεν παραβολὴν αὐτοῖς· ἴδετε τὴν συκῆν καὶ πάντα τὰ δένδρα· [30]ὅταν προβάλωσιν ἤδη, βλέποντες ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτῶν γινώσκετε ὅτι ἤδη ἐγγὺς τὸ θέρος ἐστίν· [31]οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς, ὅταν ἴδητε ταῦτα γινόμενα, γινώσκετε ὅτι ἐγγύς ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. [32]ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται. [33]ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ παρελεύσονται, οἱ δὲ λόγοι μου οὐ μὴ παρελεύσονται. [34]Προσέχετε δὲ ἑαυτοῖς μήποτε βαρηθῶσιν ὑμῶν αἱ καρδίαι ἐν κραιπάλῃ καὶ μέθῃ καὶ μερίμναις βιωτικαῖς καὶ ἐπιστῇ ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς αἰφνίδιος ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνη [35]ὡς παγίς· ἐπεισελεύσεται γὰρ ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς καθημένους ἐπὶ πρόσωπον πάσης τῆς γῆς. [36]ἀγρυπνεῖτε δὲ ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ δεόμενοι ἵνα κατισχύσητε ἐκφυγεῖν ταῦτα

	αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ θυρωρῷ ἐνετείλατο ἵνα γρηγορῇ.	πάντα τὰ μέλλοντα γίνεσθαι καὶ σταθῆναι ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. [37]Ἦν δὲ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ διδάσκων, τὰς δὲ νύκτας ἐξερχόμενος ηὐλίζετο εἰς τὸ ὄρος τὸ καλούμενον Ἐλαιῶν· [38]καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ὤρθριζεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἀκούειν αὐτοῦ. --- [[Luke 17:26-27]]
[37]Ὥσπερ γὰρ αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ Νῶε, οὕτως ἔσται ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. [38]ὡς γὰρ ἦσαν ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις [ἐκείναις] ταῖς πρὸ τοῦ κατακλυσμοῦ τρώγοντες καὶ πίνοντες, γαμοῦντες καὶ γαμίζοντες, ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας εἰσῆλθεν Νῶε εἰς τὴν κιβωτόν, [39]καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν ἕως ἦλθεν ὁ κατακλυσμὸς καὶ ἦρεν ἅπαντας, οὕτως ἔσται [καὶ] ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. [40]Τότε δύο ἔσονται ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ, εἷς παραλαμβάνεται καὶ εἷς ἀφίεται· [41]δύο ἀλήθουσαι ἐν τῷ μύλῳ, μία παραλαμβάνεται καὶ μία ἀφίεται. [42]Γρηγορεῖτε οὖν, ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε ποίᾳ ἡμέρᾳ ὁ κύριος ὑμῶν ἔρχεται.	[35]γρηγορεῖτε οὖν· οὐκ οἴδατε γὰρ πότε ὁ κύριος τῆς οἰκίας ἔρχεται, ἢ ὀψὲ ἢ μεσονύκτιον ἢ ἀλεκτοροφωνίας ἢ πρωΐ, [36]μὴ ἐλθὼν ἐξαίφνης εὕρῃ ὑμᾶς καθεύδοντας. [37]ὃ δὲ	[26]καὶ καθὼς ἐγένετο ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Νῶε, οὕτως ἔσται καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου· [27]ἤσθιον, ἔπινον, ἐγάμουν, ἐγαμίζοντο, ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας εἰσῆλθεν Νῶε εἰς τὴν κιβωτὸν καὶ ἦλθεν ὁ κατακλυσμὸς καὶ ἀπώλεσεν πάντας. [[Luke 17:34-35]] [34]λέγω ὑμῖν, ταύτῃ τῇ νυκτὶ ἔσονται δύο ἐπὶ κλίνης μιᾶς, ὁ εἷς παραλημφθήσεται καὶ ὁ ἕτερος ἀφεθήσεται· [35]ἔσονται δύο ἀλήθουσαι ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, ἡ μία παραλημφθήσεται, ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα ἀφεθήσεται. ---

[43]Ἐκεῖνο δὲ γινώσκετε ὅτι εἰ ᾔδει ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης ποίᾳ φυλακῇ ὁ κλέπτης ἔρχεται, ἐγρηγόρησεν ἂν καὶ οὐκ ἂν εἴασεν διορυχθῆναι τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ. [44]διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὑμεῖς γίνεσθε ἕτοιμοι, ὅτι ᾗ οὐ δοκεῖτε ὥρᾳ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεται. [45]Τίς ἄρα ἐστὶν ὁ πιστὸς δοῦλος καὶ φρόνιμος ὃν κατέστησεν ὁ κύριος ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκετείας αὐτοῦ τοῦ δοῦναι αὐτοῖς τὴν τροφὴν ἐν καιρῷ; [46]μακάριος ὁ δοῦλος ἐκεῖνος ὃν ἐλθὼν ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ εὑρήσει οὕτως ποιοῦντα· [47]ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐπὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν αὐτοῦ καταστήσει αὐτόν. [48]ἐὰν δὲ εἴπῃ ὁ κακὸς δοῦλος ἐκεῖνος ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ· χρονίζει μου ὁ κύριος, [49]καὶ ἄρξηται τύπτειν τοὺς συνδούλους αὐτοῦ, ἐσθίῃ δὲ καὶ πίνῃ μετὰ τῶν μεθυόντων, [50]ἥξει ὁ κύριος τοῦ δούλου ἐκείνου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ᾗ οὐ προσδοκᾷ καὶ ἐν ὥρᾳ ᾗ οὐ γινώσκει, [51]καὶ διχοτομήσει αὐτὸν καὶ τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ὑποκριτῶν θήσει· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων.	ὑμῖν λέγω πᾶσιν λέγω, γρηγορεῖτε.	[[Luke 12:39-46]] [39]τοῦτο δὲ γινώσκετε ὅτι εἰ ᾔδει ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης ποίᾳ ὥρᾳ ὁ κλέπτης ἔρχεται, οὐκ ἂν ἀφῆκεν διορυχθῆναι τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ. [40]καὶ ὑμεῖς γίνεσθε ἕτοιμοι, ὅτι ᾗ ὥρᾳ οὐ δοκεῖτε ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεται. [41]Εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Πέτρος· κύριε, πρὸς ἡμᾶς τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην λέγεις ἢ καὶ πρὸς πάντας; [42]καὶ εἶπεν ὁ κύριος· τίς ἄρα ἐστὶν ὁ πιστὸς οἰκονόμος ὁ φρόνιμος, ὃν καταστήσει ὁ κύριος ἐπὶ τῆς θεραπείας αὐτοῦ τοῦ διδόναι ἐν καιρῷ [τὸ] σιτομέτριον; [43]μακάριος ὁ δοῦλος ἐκεῖνος, ὃν ἐλθὼν ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ εὑρήσει ποιοῦντα οὕτως. [44]ἀληθῶς λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐπὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν αὐτοῦ καταστήσει αὐτόν. [45]ἐὰν δὲ εἴπῃ ὁ δοῦλος ἐκεῖνος ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ· χρονίζει ὁ κύριός μου ἔρχεσθαι, καὶ ἄρξηται τύπτειν τοὺς παῖδας καὶ τὰς παιδίσκας, ἐσθίειν τε καὶ πίνειν καὶ μεθύσκεσθαι, [46]ἥξει ὁ κύριος τοῦ δούλου ἐκείνου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ᾗ οὐ προσδοκᾷ καὶ ἐν ὥρᾳ ᾗ οὐ γινώσκει, καὶ διχοτομήσει αὐτὸν καὶ τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀπίστων θήσει.

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